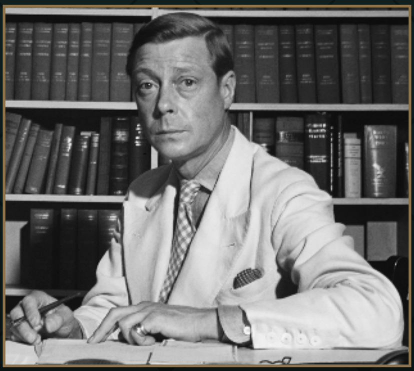
NEW

SCANDALS
OF THE
WINDSORS

The rumours and romances that threatened to ruin the royal family

From the makers of... ALL ABOUT HISTORY



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THE ABDICATION CRISIS • SURVIVING WAR • ENDURING LOVE

WELCOME

When King George V changed his dynasty's name from Saxe-Coburg & Gotha to Windsor in 1917, he wasn't just distancing himself from the family's Germanic roots at a time of war – he was also shrugging off years of scandal and secrecy that had surrounded his playboy father, King Edward VII. But where King George toed the line and was determined to be the model of moral decency, his relations had other ideas.

In this brand-new book, uncover the dramas that threatened to ruin the monarchy, from Edward VIII's dangerous liaisons and Princess Margaret's saucy affairs to the war of the Waleses and Prince Andrew's shameful links to Jeffrey Epstein.

SCANDALS OF THE WINDSORS

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Prince Henry's inappropriate dalliance with a married woman that led to a sordid case of blackmail

MEET THE

Discover the royal family that adapted and survived the travails of the 20th century

Written by **Scott Reeves**

The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 not only brought about the end of the longest reign in British history, it also concluded nearly two centuries of the House of Hanover on the British throne. The new monarch, Edward VII, began the era of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha by virtue of his descent from Prince Albert.

Edward's own death in 1910 passed the throne to his eldest surviving son, George V, but he soon ran into problems with his cumbersome surname. When war broke out with Germany and its allies in 1914, the royal family's Germanic origins became something of an embarrassment, not least when Gotha bombers started crossing the Channel and dropping bombs on English cities. In 1917, George renounced his claim to any German titles and adopted a suitably English family name: the House of Windsor.

Prince Albert ultimately succeeded his father and adopted the regnal name George VI, but not before the short-lived reign and controversial abdication of his brother, Edward VIII. When Elizabeth II succeeded George VI in 1952, having a woman on the throne resurrected the old problem of the royal family name. Since Elizabeth was married to Prince Philip, who had adopted the surname Mountbatten after renouncing his own Greek titles, convention suggested that Elizabeth should be the first monarch of the new House of Mountbatten. However, pressure from Queen Mary – the wife of George V, who had changed the family name in 1917 – saw Elizabeth issue her own proclamation that she and her descendents would continue to use the name Windsor. Philip was displeased but was ultimately forced to accept that his children would not inherit his name.

Around 100 people have borne the Windsor name in the century since the royal house was established. Many of them have lived and died in obscurity far from the line of succession, but others were under the public gaze in a manner that would have been unrecognisable to pre-20th-century royals. The birth of the modern media only served to heighten scrutiny; the activities of the royals no longer just created newspaper headlines, they were also reported on the radio, television and online in a 24/7 news culture.

"SCANDAL HAS BEEN AN EVER-PRESENT COMPANION TO THE WINDSORS"

Hardly surprising, therefore, that some of the more questionable activities of the House of Windsor reached the wider world. From the existential threat of the abdication crisis to the tabloid-fodder exploits of Prince Harry and the Duchess of York, from extra-marital affairs and secret children to the shocking death of Princess Diana, scandal has been an ever-present companion to the inhabitants of the House of Windsor.

Yet the royal family survived a century that saw other monarchies around the world collapse. The Windsors endured by being staunch defenders of tradition while embracing new innovations. George VI and Elizabeth II benefited from their personal popularity, even as the monarchical system around them appeared on the point of crumbling.

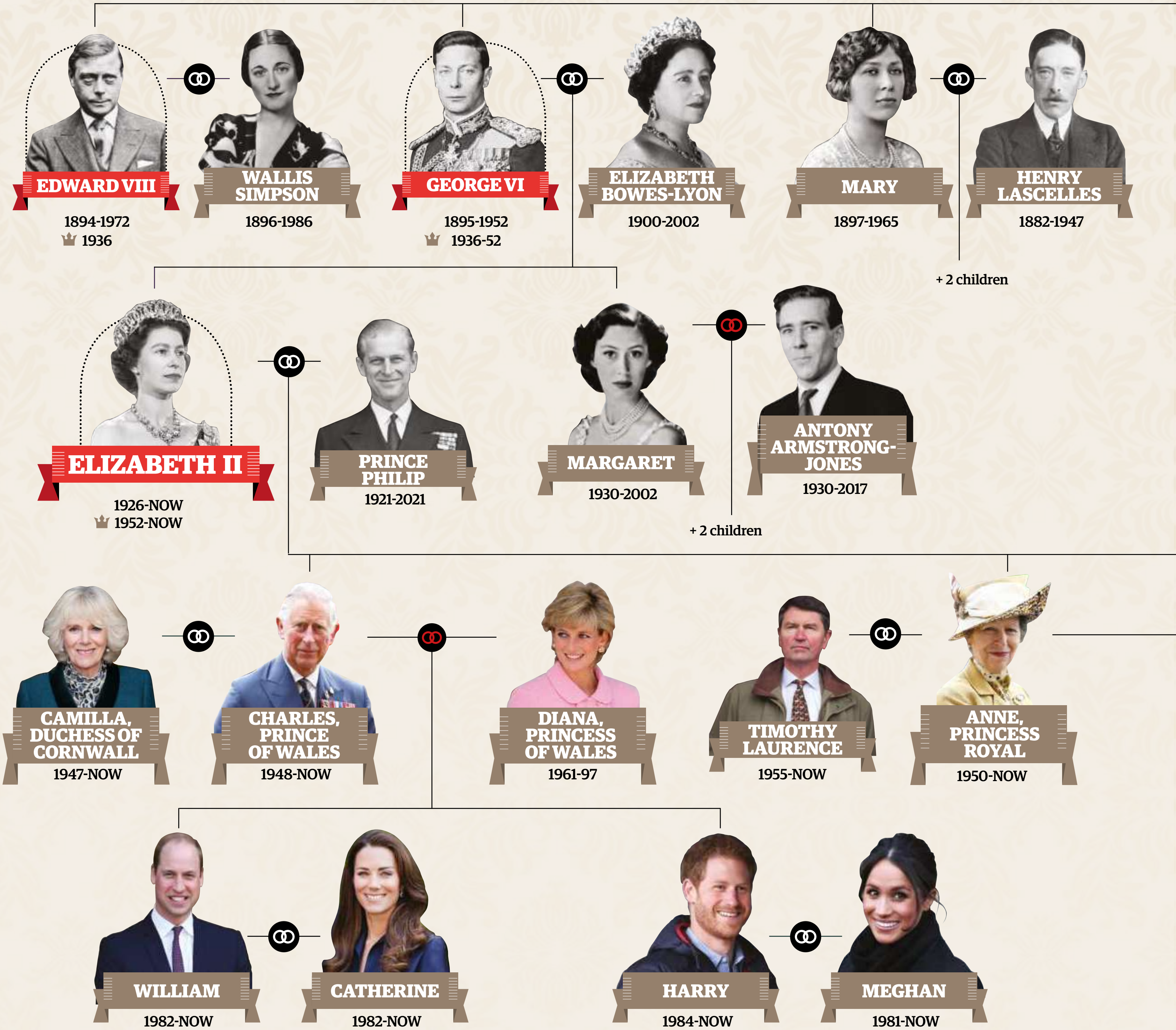
Shame and scandal has plagued the Windsors since the family was founded, but history suggests that the royal family will continue to hold a special place in British hearts.

WINDSORS

THE HOUSE OF WINDSOR

Trace the generations of scandalous British royals

♛ Reign
Marriage
Divorced



EDWARD VIII
1894-1972
♛ 1936

WALLIS SIMPSON
1896-1986

GEORGE VI
1895-1952
♛ 1936-52

ELIZABETH BOWES-LYON
1900-2002

MARY
1897-1965

HENRY LASCELLES
1882-1947

+ 2 children

ELIZABETH II
1926-NOW
♛ 1952-NOW

PRINCE PHILIP
1921-2021

MARGARET
1930-2002

ANTONY ARMSTRONG-JONES
1930-2017

+ 2 children

CAMILLA, DUCHESS OF CORNWALL
1947-NOW

CHARLES, PRINCE OF WALES
1948-NOW

DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES
1961-97

TIMOTHY LAURENCE
1955-NOW

ANNE, PRINCESS ROYAL
1950-NOW

WILLIAM
1982-NOW

CATHERINE
1982-NOW

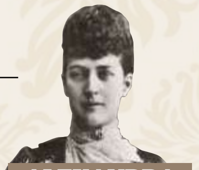
HARRY
1984-NOW

MEGHAN
1981-NOW

EDWARD VII

1841-1910

♛ 1902-10



ALEXANDRA OF DENMARK

1844-1925

+ 4 other children

ALBERT, DUKE OF CLARENCE

1864-92

GEORGE V

1865-1936

♛ 1910-36

MARY OF TECK

1867-1953

ABOVE: THE HOUSE OF WINDSOR HAS SURVIVED SCANDAL, RUMOURS AND DYNASTIC DRAMA

HENRY OF GLOUCESTER

1900-74

ALICE MONTAGUE

1901-2004

GEORGE, DUKE OF KENT

1902-42

MARINA OF GREECE AND DENMARK

1906-68

JOHN

1905-19

WILLIAM

1941-72

RICHARD

1944-NOW

EDWARD

1935-NOW

ALEXANDRA

1936-NOW

MICHAEL

1942-NOW

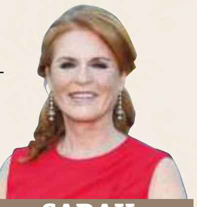
MARK PHILLIPS

1948-NOW

+ 2 children

ANDREW, DUKE OF YORK

1960-NOW



SARAH FERGUSON

1959-NOW

+ 2 children

EDWARD, EARL OF WESSEX

1964-NOW

SOPHIE, COUNTESS OF WESSEX

1965-NOW

+ 2 children

SEX, LIES AND TOE-SUCKING

Dig the dirt on the scandals that have engulfed the royal family in recent decades

Written by **Scott Reeves**

THE EPSTEIN AFFAIR

The most damaging royal scandal of recent years

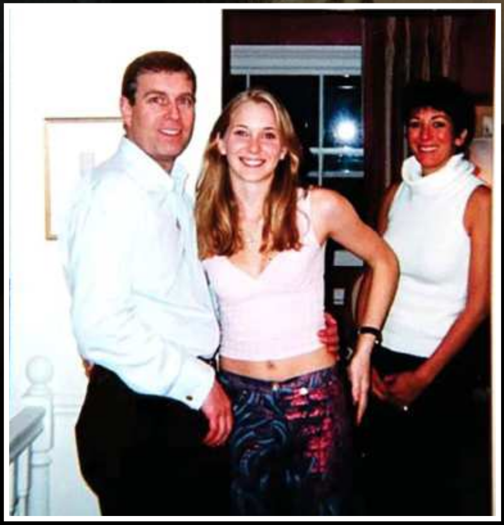
Jeffrey Epstein was not the kind of person the royal family wanted to be associated with. An American financier who specialised in investments for the ultra-wealthy, he lived a billionaire lifestyle on the proceeds of other people's money and mixed with politicians and celebrities, but pleaded guilty to a charge of solicitation of prostitution involving a 14-year-old girl in 2008. He was sentenced to a year and a half in prison and served 13 months, being released under licence in August 2010.

According to Prince Andrew's own account, he first met Jeffrey Epstein in 1999 after being introduced by Epstein's former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell. Despite the Duke of York saying that he and Epstein were "not that close", the two attended several functions together and, according to The Times, Epstein paid for a yacht in Thailand for the duke to holiday with him. A Channel 4 Dispatches investigation discovered that Epstein and Andrew met on at least ten occasions over 12 years from 1999, with the duke staying for several days at a time at Epstein's homes in New York, Palm Beach and the US Virgin Islands.

Epstein even attended Princess Beatrice's 18th birthday party at Windsor Castle in 2006, two months after an arrest warrant had been issued for sexual assault of a minor – Andrew said he was unaware of the legal case and that Epstein attended as Maxwell's plus-one. When Andrew belatedly decided to break off the friendship after Epstein was released from prison, he travelled to the disgraced financier's home and stayed with him since it was a convenient place to stay.

However inappropriate the relationship, the most damaging allegations involve the Duke of York's own conduct. First it arose that, after Epstein's release from prison, Andrew met him to negotiate a deal in which the financier would pay £15,000 to help settle a debt owed by his ex-wife, Sarah, Duchess of York. It was hardly the actions of a man looking to distance himself from a convicted sex offender. Then court documents released in 2015 revealed claims that a woman who described herself as Epstein's "sex slave" had sex with Andrew on three occasions.

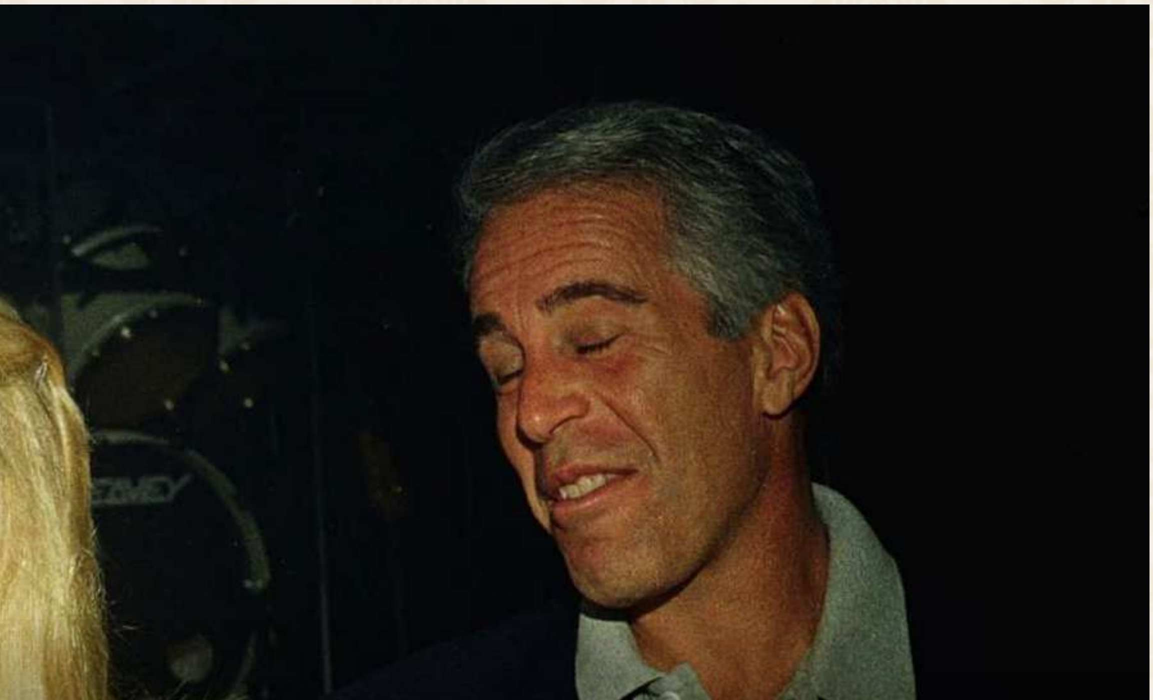
Prince Andrew claimed to have no recollection of meeting his accuser, Virginia Roberts Giuffre, despite being pictured



Elizabeth II famously described 1992 as her "annus horribilis", but the Queen has had to endure far more than just one year of problems during her reign. Her children, husband and wider family have regularly come under public scrutiny for questionable actions and activities in recent years; only the monarch herself seems to have survived without scandal attached to her name.

Some of the shame heaped on the royal family over the past few decades can be attributed to the high jinks of youth or the kind of sexual affairs and interactions that inevitably happen among young people; they may occur in every household, but they come under more rigorous examination in the nation's first family. However, some scandals have involved the kind of corruption and criminality that has raised troubling questions about the role and future of the royal family in its present form.

From Nazi fancy dress costumes and royal love letters to the dubious relationship between a prince and a convicted sex offender, here are the scandals that the Queen has had to deal with in the latter years of her reign.



with his arm around her in a photograph supposedly taken by Epstein – one that Andrew suggested might have been doctored. On the first occasion, 10 March 2001, Giuffre claimed she was flown to Britain by Epstein and had sex with Andrew in Maxwell's London home. Giuffre, then 17 years old, says she was paid $15,000 by Epstein for the deed. Andrew responded that he was not at the Tramp nightclub, as Giuffre said, but a birthday party at Pizza Express in Woking. The second occasion allegedly happened in New York on 9 April 2001 and the third at Little St James, Epstein's private island in the US Virgin Islands, when Giuffre was around 18 years old.

Andrew knew that the situation was getting out of control. Days after he was named in the court documents, he emailed Maxwell asking for help, writing: "Let me know when we can talk. Got some specific questions to ask you about Virginia Roberts." The issue returned to the headlines in August 2019 when new court documents revealed that a second girl had made accusations against Andrew, and Epstein committed suicide in his prison cell after being charged with sex trafficking of minors in Florida and New York.

Amid mounting demands that he explain his past relationship with Epstein, the Duke of York recorded a BBC Newsnight interview in November 2019. However, his tone did not dampen the growing public anger – it fuelled it. The prince was criticised for saying that he did not regret his friendship with Epstein and his explanations were met with disbelief, notably that he could not have been sweat-covered in a nightclub due to him temporarily losing the ability to sweat after an adrenaline overdose during the Falklands War.

Days later, a statement from Buckingham Palace announced that Andrew, with the consent of the Queen, was suspending his public duties "for the foreseeable future" and the duke would step down from all of his patronages. In August 2021, Giuffre filed a lawsuit against Andrew in the US, accusing him of sexual assault. The duke attempted to have the civil case dismissed, claiming that Giuffre had signed away her right to sue him in a settlement she had made with Epstein in 2009.

This attempt failed and in January 2022, the Queen stripped Andrew's military titles and his royal patronages. It was also announced that the duke would stop using the title His Royal Highness in an official capacity and that he would be defending himself as "a private citizen." Two months later, it was revealed that Andrew had reached a financial settlement with Giuffre, ending the civil case against him. While the lawsuit has ended, it is highly unlikely that the Queen's second son will ever return to public life.

MAIN IMAGE: ANDREW, PICTURED WITH JEFFREY EPSTEIN AND MELANIA TRUMP (LEFT), AT MAR-A-LAGO IN 2000

LEFT: PRINCE ANDREW CLAIMED THE IMAGE OF HIM AND VIRGINIA ROBERTS GIUFFRE, ALLEGEDLY TAKEN IN 2001, HAD BEEN DOCTORED

ANNE'S LOVE LETTERS

The notes from an employee that doomed a marriage

ABOVE: ANNE MARRIED LAURENCE IN A CHURCH OF SCOTLAND SERVICE SINCE IT HAD NO MORAL OBJECTION TO THE REMARRIAGE OF DIVORCEES

Princess Anne's marriage to Mark Phillips was already on the rocks in 1989 when *The Sun* announced that it had in its possession four love letters to Anne from an unnamed suitor. It was, unusually, Buckingham Palace who named the author, Commander Timothy Laurence, who met the Princess Royal while serving as the Queen's Equerry. Anne and Phillips separated and divorced three years later; within months she was married to Laurence. The quick turnaround suggests that the relationship between the princess and her mother's member of staff probably played a role in ending the unsteady first marriage.

CASH FOR ACCESS

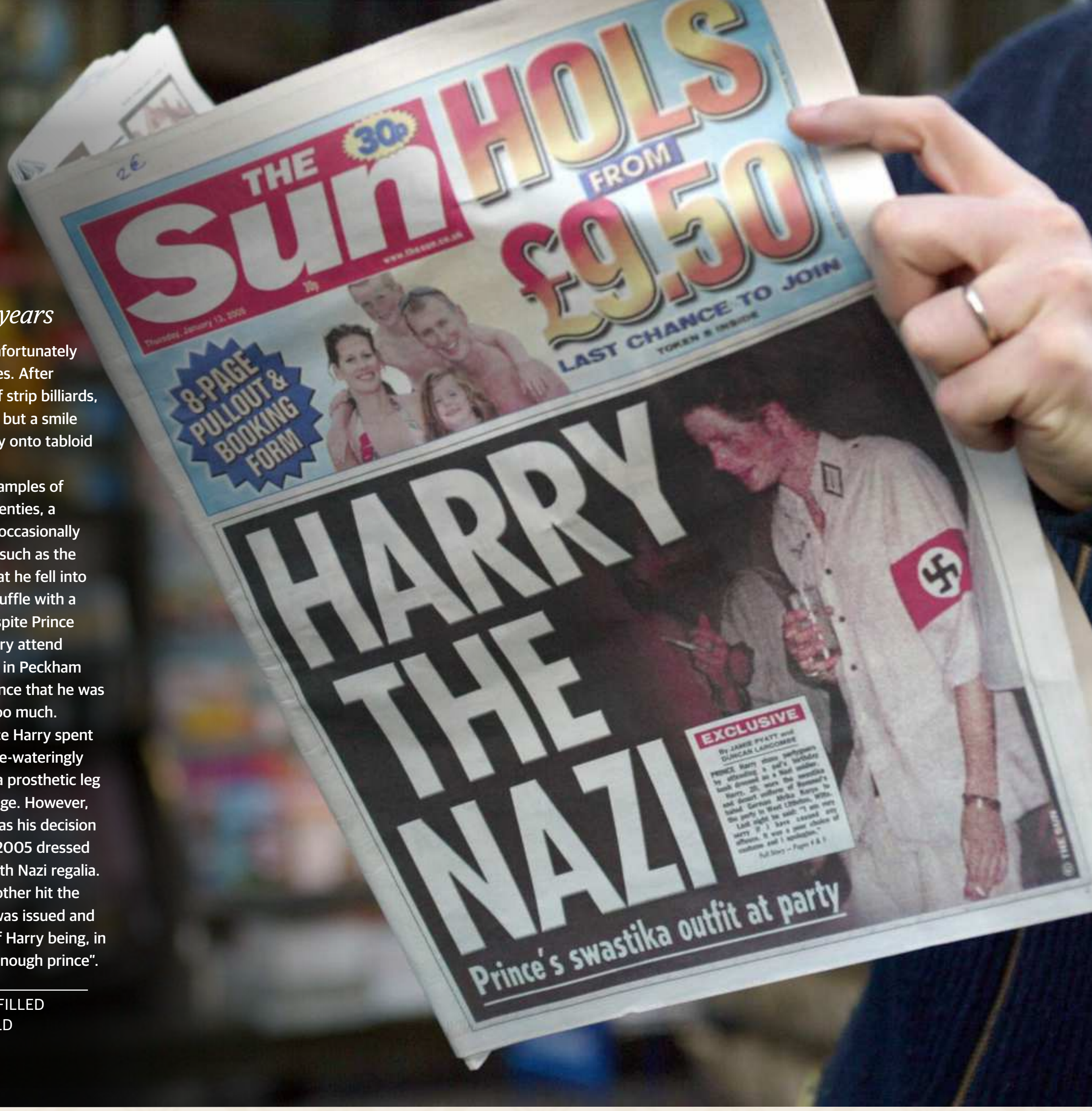
The sting that ensnared Fergie's dubious dealings

ABOVE: IN 2015 THE 'FAKE SHEIKH' MAZHER MAHMOOD WAS CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO PERVERT THE COURSE OF JUSTICE

"£500,000, when you can, to me." The words of Sarah, Duchess of York, appeared to suggest that paying her half a million pounds would grant access to her former husband, Prince Andrew. Unfortunately for the duchess, she was not speaking to an Indian businessman as she thought, but an undercover reporter called Mazher Mahmood carrying out a sting for the *News of the World*.

Sarah left the meeting with a suitcase containing $40,000 in cash, unaware that the newspaper would reveal all a few days later. Andrew, a UK trade envoy who had been divorced from Sarah for 14 years, was unaware of his ex-wife's cash-for-access deal. She explained her behaviour by saying that she had been drinking and was "in the gutter at that moment". She said that she wanted the money for a friend who needed $38,000.

Instead of helping her cash flow, Sarah's reputation ended up taking a hit. Her publishers printed extra copies of her upcoming book in case tabloid notoriety translated into more sales, but even that did not come about.



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HARRY THE NAZI

EXCLUSIVE

Prince's swastika outfit at party

WILD CHILD

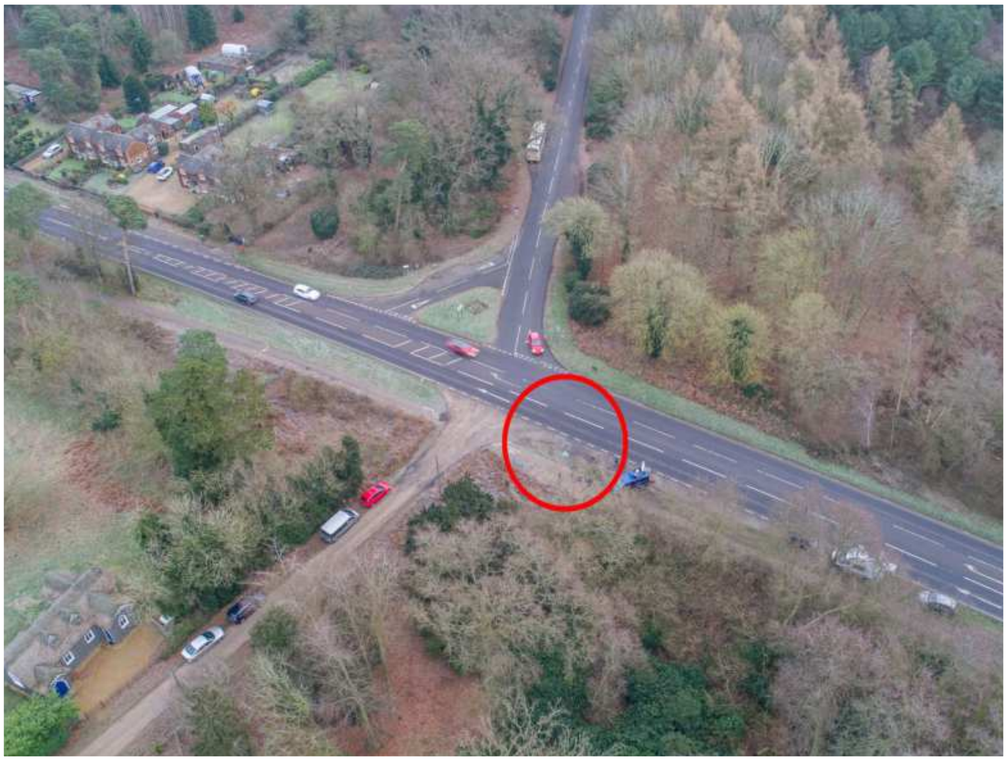
The younger sibling's party years

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. Unfortunately for Harry, that rule doesn't apply to princes. After playing (and presumably losing) a game of strip billiards, Harry was photographed wearing nothing but a smile and the pictures inevitably made their way onto tabloid website TMZ.

The nude photos were one of many examples of Prince Harry's escapades in his roaring twenties, a decade in which he partied hard and was occasionally caught out. Often they involved alcohol – such as the time he danced so hard at a pool party that he fell into the water, or the time he ended up in a scuffle with a cameraman after leaving a nightclub – despite Prince Charles reportedly making 17-year-old Harry attend Featherstone Lodge Rehabilitation Centre in Peckham for a day to send a signal to the young prince that he was enjoying the booze and cannabis a little too much.

According to actor Dominic West, Prince Harry spent a charity trek to the South Pole telling "eye-wateringly rude jokes" and drank champagne out of a prosthetic leg to celebrate the completion of the challenge. However, of all Harry's antics, the most notorious was his decision to attend a fancy-dress birthday party in 2005 dressed up as an Afrika Korps soldier, complete with Nazi regalia. As usually occurred when the younger brother hit the news for the wrong reasons, an apology was issued and it was shrugged off as another example of Harry being, in his own words, "too much army and not enough prince".

RIGHT: PRINCE HARRY'S SHENANIGANS FILLED MANY COLUMN INCHES DURING HIS WILD YOUNGER YEARS



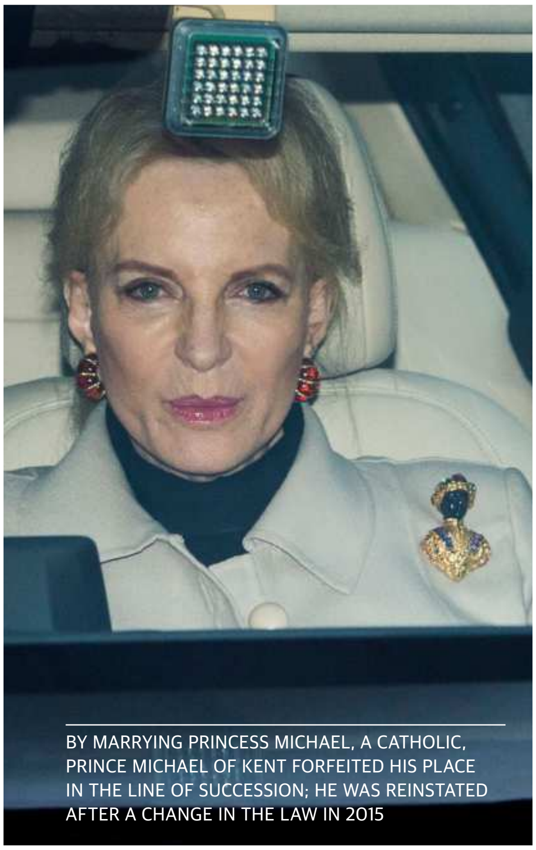
CONSORT'S CAR CRASH

The accident that could have been far worse

The royal family may have plenty of staff taking care of their every need, but that hasn't stopped them from a degree of independence in their own vehicles. The Duke of Edinburgh's time behind the wheel came to a sudden stop at the age of 97 when he crashed his Land Rover Freelander as he pulled out of a driveway near the Sandringham estate.

The duke blamed the low sun for driving out in front of Emma Fairweather, who suffered a broken wrist in the crash. Thankfully her nine-month-old son was unharmed. Remarkably, the royal consort was also unhurt despite his car flipping over and Philip having to be helped from the car by a passing motorist. Despite admitting he was "somewhat shaken" in a letter of apology, he was photographed without a seatbelt while driving a replacement Land Rover two days after the crash before voluntarily surrendering his driving licence.

LEFT: THE SCENE OF THE CRASH. CIRCLED IN RED IS WHERE PRINCE PHILIP'S CAR ENDED UP ON ITS ROOF



BY MARRYING PRINCESS MICHAEL, A CATHOLIC, PRINCE MICHAEL OF KENT FORFEITED HIS PLACE IN THE LINE OF SUCCESSION; HE WAS REINSTATED AFTER A CHANGE IN THE LAW IN 2015

THE BLACKAMOOR BROOCH

The fashion faux-pas that soured Meghan's family introduction

Princess Michael of Kent – the German wife of the Queen's cousin – found herself the centre of a media storm in 2017 when she attended a Christmas dinner at Buckingham Palace wearing a Blackamoor brooch, a stylised African figure that was quickly dubbed a racist symbol by commentators. What made the choice of jewellery even more surprising was that it was the first occasion that Prince Harry's multiracial fiancée, Meghan Markle, would join the family celebrations.

It may have been a simple misjudgement, while some experts argued that the brooch was not a racist Blackamoor, in which black people are usually depicted as slaves, but a Moretto Veneziano, in which the figure is dressed in elaborate Oriental clothing. However, critics were quick to point out that Princess Michael had previous form when it came to racism, reportedly suggesting that a group of black people in a restaurant "go back to the colonies" and suggesting in a 2005 interview that British people should take more care to protect their bloodlines when their children marry. Considering that her father was an SS officer – a fact that was only publicly acknowledged several years after her royal wedding – perhaps the apple didn't fall too far from the tree.

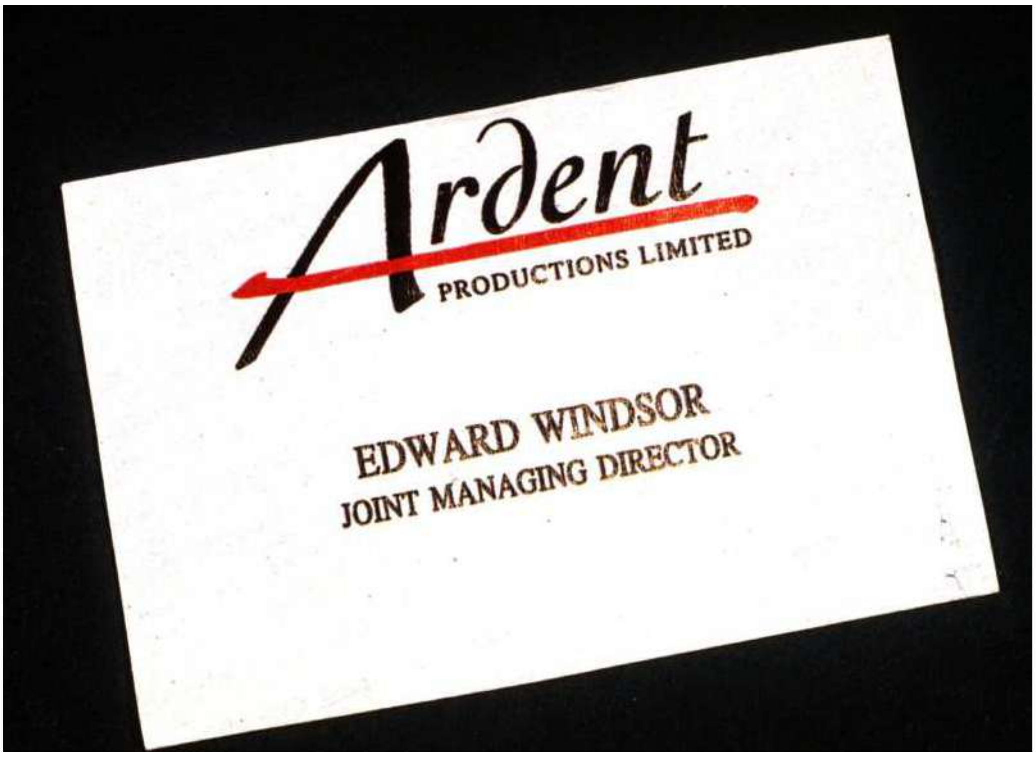
ARDENT PRODUCTIONS

The royal company that became an industry joke

Prince Edward had high hopes when he founded Ardent Productions in 1993, immersing himself in research for its first television documentary about Edward VIII. However, the dream of a career in broadcasting soon crashed and burned. Seen as little more than a vanity project, Ardent's programmes were derided as old-fashioned, the prince was criticised for using his royal connections for financial gain and the company incurred the wrath of Prince Charles when it invaded the privacy of William during his time at the University of St Andrews.

The company reported losses every year it operated except one (when Edward did not draw a salary) and, in 2002, Edward stepped down from the board. Ardent Productions was voluntarily dissolved seven years later with only £40 of assets remaining.

BELOW: EDWARD'S BUSINESS CARD FROM 1993

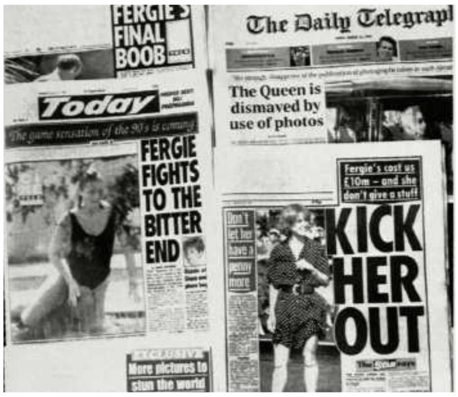


Ardent
PRODUCTIONS LIMITED

EDWARD WINDSOR
JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR

FERGIE'S EMBARRASSING PHOTOS

The paparazzi snaps that damaged a royal relationship


FERGIE'S FINAL BOOB
Today
The game sensation of the 90s is coming
FERGIE FIGHTS TO THE BITTER END
EXCLUSIVE More pictures to stun the world
The Daily Telegraph
The Queen is dismayed by use of photos
Fergie's cost us £10m – and she don't give a stuff
KICK HER OUT

ABOVE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SARAH, DUCHESS OF YORK, AND JOHN BRYAN BECAME AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE ROYAL FAMILY AFTER PAPARAZZI PHOTOS WERE PRINTED

Just months after the separation of the Duke and Duchess of York in 1992, humiliating photos of Sarah appeared in the tabloids – sunbathing topless in the south of France was one thing, but having her toes sucked by wealthy financial adviser John Bryan while she did so was quite another. It was an embarrassingly undignified way to be captured by the paparazzi. Sarah's relationship with the royal family broke down, not least because she was staying with the Queen at Balmoral when the photos were first printed. It must have been an uncomfortable moment at the breakfast table when those newspapers were delivered.

LOVE RAT

The lover's plan to make money off his royal affair

ABOVE: HEWITT ATTEMPTED TO CULTIVATE A NEW PUBLIC IMAGE IN THE 2000s, APPEARING ON SEVERAL REALITY TELEVISION SHOWS

More than a decade after Charles and Diana divorced, former royal lover James Hewitt found himself back in the news when he tried to sell 64 personal letters from the Princess in 2003. Portrayed in the media as dishonourable for demanding £10 million for the correspondence, Hewitt backed out of the plan and exiled himself to Spain. New rumours that he was considering selling them emerged in 2015, although they currently remain in Hewitt's hands.

THE SUSSEXES SPEAK OUT

All you need to know about the Duke and Duchess' explosive interview with Oprah Winfrey

In January 2020, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex stepped down as working members of the royal family and relocated to California. Their departure, dubbed 'Megxit' by the UK press, was said to have "blindsided" the Queen and other members of the royal family. Announcing their desire for privacy and quiet away from the press, Harry and Meghan have nonetheless found themselves the focus of countless headlines ever since.

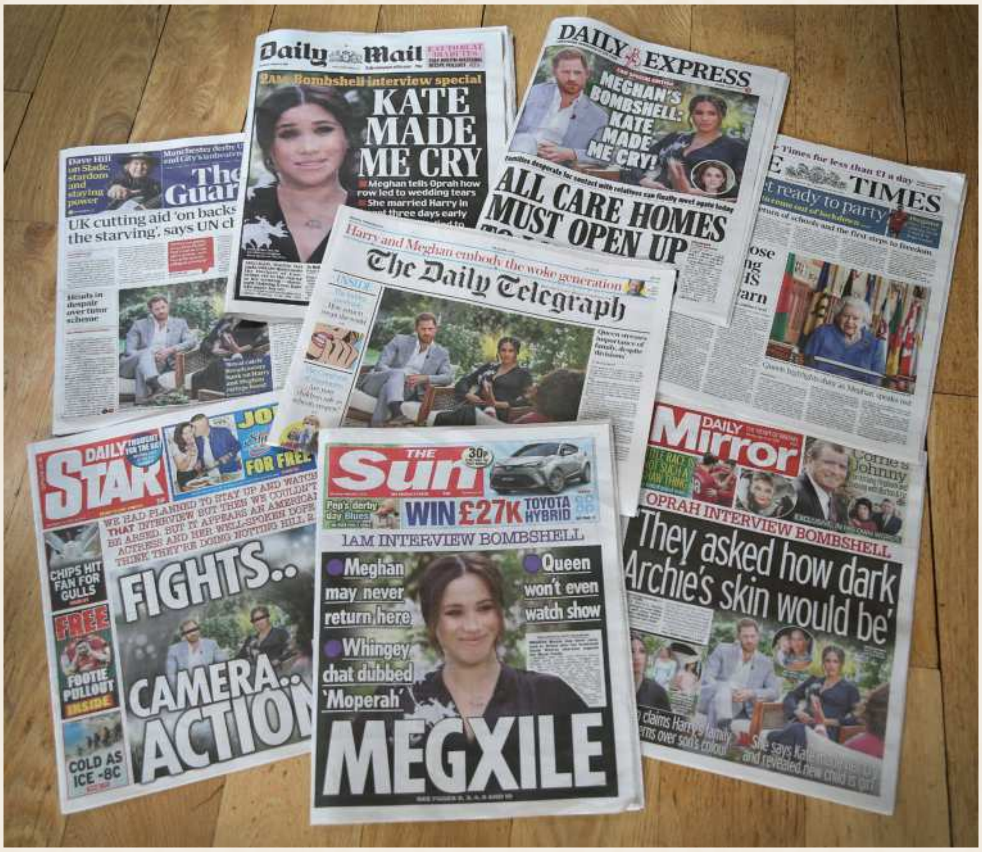
On Valentine's Day 2021, the couple revealed they were pregnant after suffering a devastating miscarriage the previous summer. Just a few days later, it was announced that they had filmed an interview with US media mogul Oprah Winfrey, who had attended their wedding. Immediately, speculation grew that the interview would offer the most revealing insight into the royal family since Harry's mother, Princess Diana, gave her controversial interview with *Panorama* in 1995.

A week after the announcement, it was confirmed by Buckingham Palace that after a planned annual review, the Duke and Duchess would not be returning as working members of the royal family and therefore they would have to give up their royal patronages and honorary military appointments. In response, the couple released a statement reiterating their desire to continue supporting the organisations they had represented, declaring: "We can all live a life of service. Service is universal."

Meanwhile, Harry's grandfather, Prince Philip, had been admitted to hospital after feeling unwell, ultimately undergoing a successful procedure for a pre-existing heart condition. There were calls for the couple to postpone the interview – something that was likely out of their control – in light of Philip's illness, but it was aired as planned.

Unsurprisingly, the interview contained many revelations, such as Meghan's admission that she had not done any research on the royal family before joining them, and nor did she look her husband up online while they were dating. She claimed that she had been given no guidance or etiquette advice on how to be a royal and that she had to quickly learn how to curtsy before meeting the Queen for the first time. Believing it to be "part of the fanfare", Meghan stated that she did not realise the family had to still curtsy to the Queen in private.

She also corrected rumours that she had made the Duchess of Cambridge cry over flower girl dresses, revealing to Oprah that it was the other way around and that Kate had brought her flowers and a note to apologise. Nevertheless, the false story persisted and Meghan was disappointed that nobody attempted to correct it. The Duchess also stated that the fanfare of the wedding led to the couple exchanging vows in private with the Archbishop of Canterbury, three days before the ceremony that was televised worldwide.


Daily Mail
KATE MADE ME CRY
The Guardian
DAILY EXPRESS
MEGHAN'S BOMBSHELL: KATE MADE ME CRY!
ALL CARE HOMES MUST OPEN UP
THE TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
Harry and Meghan embody the woke generation
DAILY STAR
FIGHTS.. CAMERA.. ACTION
The Sun
MEGXILE
Daily Mirror
They asked how dark Archie's skin would be'

Harry admitted that his relationship with both his father, Prince Charles, and his brother, Prince William, had been strained. He claimed that his family "literally cut me off financially", forcing him to sign lucrative deals with companies such as Netflix and Spotify so that he could afford security for his family. He said that Charles had "stopped taking my calls" after the couple stepped back from the royal family and that he felt "really let down". As for William, Harry asserted that he loved him, "but we were on different paths".

Even so, the couple revealed that they maintained a close relationship with the Queen. Harry claimed that he had spoken to her more the past year than ever before, while Meghan praised her warmly, stating that the Queen "has always been wonderful to me".

Among the upsetting revelations made was Meghan admitting how lonely she was after joining the royal family and that her mental health deteriorated to the point where she considered self-harm and suicide. When Meghan approached senior members of the institution for support, only to be apparently told that seeking help "wouldn't be good for the institution". Harry confessed that after his wife revealed that she was feeling suicidal, he "had no idea what to do" and he went to "a very dark place as well".

Perhaps even more damaging were the allegations the couple made regarding race, with Meghan revealing that while she was pregnant with Archie, there were "concerns and conversations about how dark his skin might be when he was born". Although Meghan declined to name those who had expressed these concerns, saying "I think that would be very damaging to them", Oprah revealed the day after the interview that Harry had told her that it was not the Queen or Prince Philip.

ABOVE: HARRY AND MEGHAN'S INTERVIEW WAS WATCHED AROUND THE WORLD

LEFT: THE INTERVIEW'S EXPLOSIVE CONTENT MADE HEADLINES IN THE UK

ROYAL TITLES EXPLAINED

Why is Archie not a prince?

When Archie was born, it was claimed that Harry and Meghan did not want him to be made a prince. However, in their interview, the couple declared that this was not their decision – leading to speculation about why Archie was not made a prince, with theories suggesting that it is because he is mixed race.

In 1917, King George V issued the 1917 Letters Patent, which restricted who was eligible to use the HRH title and be a prince and princess. Accordingly, the "grandchildren of the sons of any such Sovereign in the direct male line (save only the eldest living son of the eldest son of the Prince of Wales) shall have and enjoy in all occasions the style and title enjoyed by the children of dukes of this realm".

Therefore Prince George, as the eldest son of Prince William, is the only great-grandson of the Queen entitled to be a prince. The rules were adjusted by the Queen in December 2012 to ensure that all of William's children would be entitled to use the HRH title and be a prince or princess. This was done because if William and Kate's firstborn had been a girl, she would not have been eligible for the HRH title or to be a princess, despite being in the direct line of succession to the throne.

As it stands, Archie will automatically become a prince when his grandfather, Prince Charles, ascends the throne. However, Meghan claimed that "they want to change the convention for Archie" so that he would not become a prince, but she did not elaborate further. This could be about Charles' well-known desire to reduce the size of the royal family, although he has never stated his plan on how he will achieve this.

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As the eldest son of Queen Victoria, Edward had everything a young prince could wish for, but was a magnet for scandal

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> “THE PAIR WERE CLOSER THAN EVER BEFORE, AND THE STAGE WAS SET FOR HEARTBREAK”

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KING EDWARD VII

THE WOMANISING KING

As the eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Edward had everything that a young Prince of Wales might wish for, but was a magnet for scandal and drove his respectable mother to distraction

Written by **Catherine Curzon**

Born in 1841 to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Edward, Prince of Wales, reigned as King Edward VII for just nine years. With a mother for whom respectable piety was a way of life, you might have expected that her eldest son would have followed her lead and lived without much extravagance and scandal. If you did think that though, you would have been in for a very rude awakening indeed.

In fact, Edward was anything but respectable and had no interest in the sort of insular existence that his mother and father had long enjoyed. Instead he wanted fun and pleasure, perhaps because he got little of it during childhood. Rather, young Edward was subjected to a rigid and strict regime of education. Prince Albert devised his son's education and with it, a stern and unflinching system of discipline should he step out of line. The little prince was being trained for monarchy and as far as Victoria and Albert were concerned, that left little room for frivolity. Yet their son struggled with his regime and consistently managed to underachieve, unable to thrive in such rigid conditions.

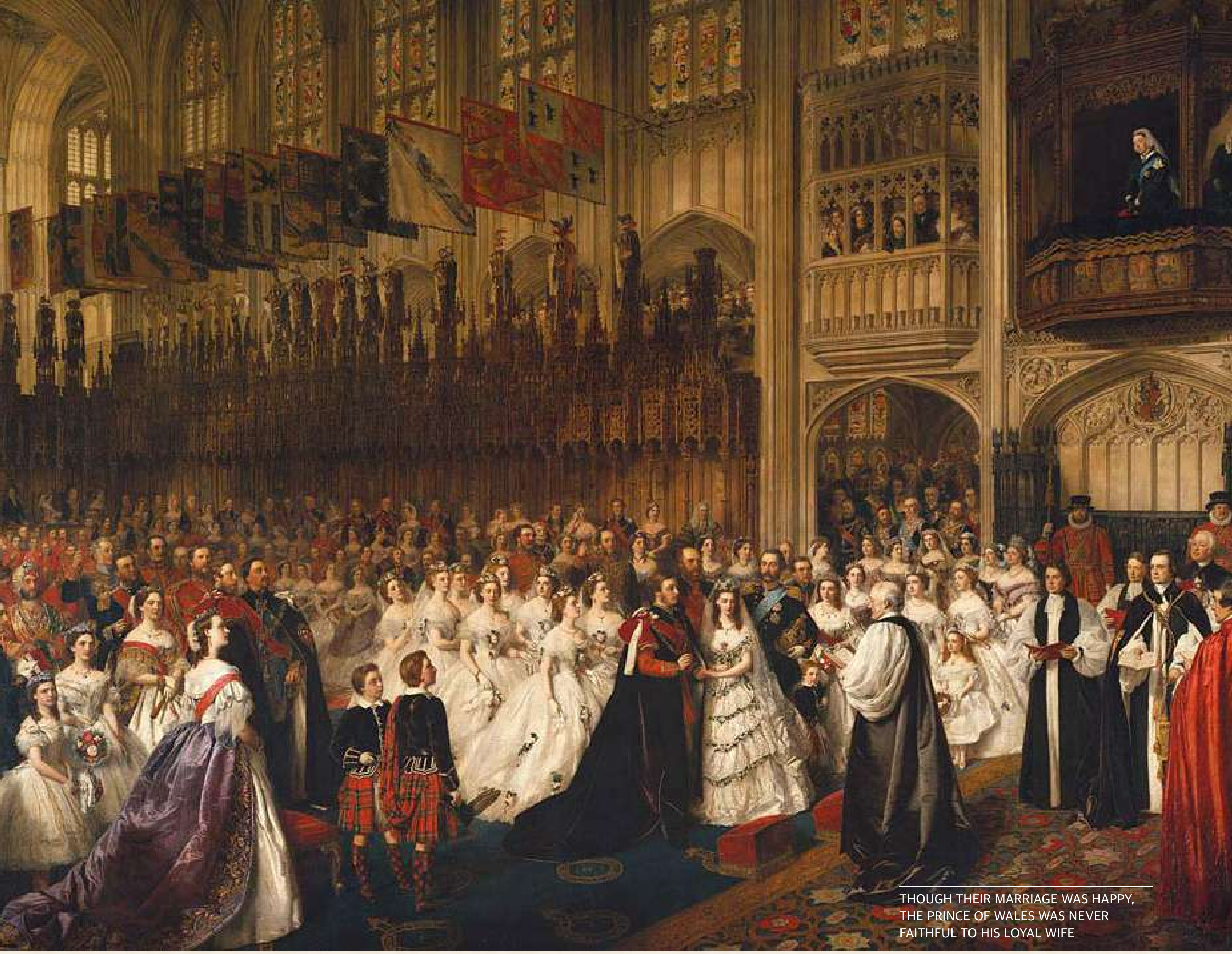
RIGHT: OVER THE YEARS, EDWARD RACKED UP SEVERAL MISTRESSES WHILE HIS WIFE TURNED A BLIND EYE

As Edward grew older he became increasingly determined to undertake a military career, dreaming of active service. Sadly for the prince, his mother had other ideas. Though Victoria allowed him to be made a colonel in the British Army, she had no intention of letting the heir to the throne risk his skin on active services.

Perhaps hoping to satisfy Edward's wish to be a soldier, Victoria and Albert agreed that their 19-year-old son could spend a summer in Ireland, taking part in military manoeuvres. The Prince of Wales passed three months encamped at Curragh with the members of the Grenadier Guards and in the course of getting to know the soldiers there, they learned that the young heir to the throne was still a sexual novice. This, the soldiers decided, would never do. Taking it upon themselves to help Edward along this delicate rite of passage, they smuggled an actress, Nellie Clifden, into the camp to meet him.

In his diary on 6, 9 and 10 September 1861, the prince recorded three short, handwritten notes. They read, "N.C. 1st time, N.C. 2nd time, N.C. 3rd time", and each one referred to a sexual liaison with Nellie. With those deceptively simple lines, Edward memorialised the loss of his virginity. The innocent Prince of Wales was no more and those three trysts were the opening act in one of the most scandalous and energetic love lives the royal family had ever seen. Sadly little is known of Nellie and the rest of her life remains a mystery, but if Edward hoped to keep his liaison with her a secret, he was to receive a shock.

Blissfully unaware of Ms Clifden's trip to Curragh, Victoria and Albert had already decided that his next move should be to take a bride and get on with the business of creating heirs. Without seeking his opinion on the matter, Queen Victoria sent Edward to Germany, supposedly to observe military manoeuvres whilst there. In fact, she had already arranged for him to meet Princess Alexandra, the highly eligible daughter of Prince Christian and Princess Louise of Denmark. It proved to be a fateful decision, for the young couple got on very well and as soon as Edward had returned to England, plans were being made for a betrothal between the young pair. For Victoria and Albert, it looked as though Edward


THOUGH THEIR MARRIAGE WAS HAPPY, THE PRINCE OF WALES WAS NEVER FAITHFUL TO HIS LOYAL WIFE

was going to toe the line of familial respectability, but she had reckoned without what would prove to be a very prodigious appetite.

Somehow news of Edward's trysts with Nellie reached his horrified parents, the same parents who had put their cheery, libertine son through an education so devoted to austere respectability that it might be argued to have sent him in the other direction. Though Prince Albert was already suffering from ill health, when Edward returned to his studies at Cambridge University, his appalled father visited him there. Albert's intention was to have a heart to heart with the son who he and Victoria felt had badly let them down. It was a cold and rainy day in November 1861 when father and son met to discuss what had actually happened in Ireland. What happened during that meeting was never made public but when Albert returned to London and his wife, his health began to deteriorate rapidly.

Albert died a fortnight after the meeting with Edward and Queen Victoria, mired in grief, lashed out for someone to blame. Despite the fact that Albert had died as a result of typhoid fever, she was convinced that his end had come about not due to illness, but because of a broken heart. A broken heart, Victoria thought, caused by Edward's scandalous behaviour with the mysterious Nellie Clifden. Queen Victoria wrote of her eldest son, "I never can, or shall, look at him without a shudder," and she never forgave Edward for causing his father to venture out in the bad weather. She continued to berate Edward in her letters for years, telling him that he was a fallen man and that his immorality and carnal desires had been the cause of his own father's death. There's really little wonder that the embattled Edward plunged headfirst into pleasure.

Nellie never ventured into notoriety again but for Edward, three tastes of excitement was never going to be enough. Kind, well-liked and independent, Edward gave up trying to impress his granite-faced mother. What was the point, after all, when she had already decided to hate him? Freed from the need to at least attempt to be the dutiful son, he embarked on life at the heart of

LILLIE LANGTRY WAS A TOTAL SUPERSTAR AND WHEN SHE AND EDWARD MET, SPARKS FLEW

LEFT: PRINCESS ALEXANDRA PROVED TO BE EXACTLY THE WIFE THAT EDWARD NEEDED

ABOVE: KNOWN FOR HER RIOTOUS SOCIAL LIFE, DAISY GREVILLE, COUNTESS OF WARWICK, WASN'T AFRAID TO BE SEEN OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE PRINCE

the society jet set. He didn't forget Nellie either, but met her again in London and Cambridge, with a popular bit of gossip claiming that he even smuggled her into Windsor Castle on the night of his 20th birthday party.

Despite all of this coming and going, Edward married Princess Alexandra on 10 March 1863. They became the most glittering couple in London, celebrated for their fabulous parties and lavish dinners, all of which drew yet more disapproval from Victoria. Yet Edward was never a faithful husband despite his wife's unfailing fidelity, nor did he try to be.

Though he had started his sex life in the arms of an actress, Edward preferred to find lovers from within his own social group. Perhaps the most tragic story that attached itself to him was his relationship with Lady Harriet Mordaunt, wife of Sir Charles Mordaunt, a Conservative MP. They socialised with the Prince of Wales and rumour had it that Lady Harriet took a number of lovers, with whom she whiled away the time whilst her husband was in the House of Commons. Sir Charles supposedly caught Edward and Lady Harriet in bed together in 1869 and from that day on, wouldn't allow his wife anywhere near the prince. When she gave birth to a seemingly blind daughter the following year, a distraught Lady Harriet became convinced that it was a divine punishment for her affairs and claimed that she had so many lovers that she couldn't be sure that Edward was the father. However, a collection of love letters from the prince convinced Mordaunt that he must be the man responsible. When the couple reached the divorce court, Mordaunt warned the Prince of Wales that he should prepare to testify. In the event he wasn't named in the divorce at all but society gossips didn't let that stop them, and the prince's name was implicated in chattering circles, if not in legal ones.

Edward became the leading light of the fashionable Marlborough House set, an exclusive social group that took its name from his London home, where they met and partied together. Rumour had it that he sired a child with one of the members of the set, Lady Susan Vane-Tempest, in 1871, but little is known of the infant child beyond that. More famous was his liaison with Lillie Langtry, a bona fide superstar actress whose devoted fan base spanned from her American homeland all the way to Europe and beyond.

The Prince of Wales and Langtry met at a dinner party in 1877, which Lillie was attending with her husband. By this point Edward was a father of six and his wife, Alexandra, had suffered extensive periods of ill health throughout the marriage. Alexandra seemed to accept her husband's proclivities though one can only imagine what Queen Victoria thought when, soon after Edward and Langtry became lovers, he presented the actress to her.

Lillie Langtry became Edward's mistress and in the Marlborough House set, everyone knew it. Their affair ended when Langtry fell pregnant by another of her lovers in summer 1880, though the couple maintained an ongoing friendship. Although Edward wasn't the father of Lillie's baby, when her husband filed for divorce, rumours of the affair made it into print for the first time. Edward sued and the journalist who wrote the article was sentenced to a short jail term.

Edward's affairs were many and varied and included the celebrated actress Sarah Bernhardt, and even Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill, whom the Prince of Wales had introduced to the man who became her husband. Yet he didn't only seek relationships amongst theatricals and his own set, but loved to spend time at La Chabanais, arguably the most luxurious brothel Paris had ever known.

ACTING ON A SUGGESTION FROM EDWARD, COURTESAN AGNES KEYSER TURNED HER HOME INTO A HOSPITAL FOR INJURED BRITISH ARMY OFFICERS

ABOVE: ALICE KEPPEL WAS DEVOTED TO EDWARD. TODAY HER GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER, CAMILLA, DUCHESS OF CORNWALL, IS THE WIFE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

MIDDLE: HARRIET MORDAUNT'S MARRIAGE ENDED THANKS TO HER AFFAIR WITH EDWARD, AND SHE SPENT HER LATER YEARS IN AN ASYLUM

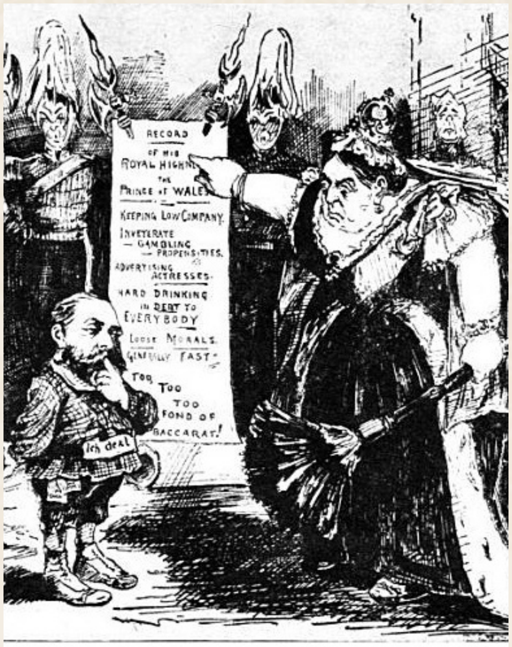
Known for its opulence and discretion, La Chabanais was a pleasure palace that stood in the shadow of the Louvre and counted some very famous names amongst its clients. Edward was a regular visitor throughout the 1880s and 1890s and became so popular at the brothel that a room was dedicated to him for his sole use. Amongst its exclusive features was a copper bathtub decorated with a figurehead that was half-woman and half-swan. Big enough to accommodate a party, when Edward visited he had the tub filled with champagne and would spend hours wallowing there in the company of a couple of his favourite courtesans. They would then retire together to relax in the shadow of Edward's own coat of arms, which dominated the wall above the bed.

Edward's room also contained an item of furniture that has become an infamous symbol of his sexual appetites. This was the Prince of Wales' siège d'amour, a very literal love seat. As a rather corpulent fellow, Edward needed to be comfortable during his amorous liaisons and the specially constructed chair allowed him to get as comfortable as was humanly possible. Richly upholstered and constructed for strength as well as luxury, the chair allowed the plump prince and his hostesses to enjoy all manner of positions without putting undue physical strain on him.

Yet it wasn't only sexual scandals in which the Prince of Wales became embroiled. In September 1890 a simple game of baccarat exploded into controversy, dragging the name of Edward through the mud with it. This was the Tranby Croft affair, and it all began when Sir William Gordon-Cumming, a lieutenant-colonel in the Scots Guards, was accused of cheating during a game of baccarat.

Alongside the Prince of Wales, Gordon-Cumming was one of a party who were staying at Tranby Croft in Yorkshire as guests of Arthur Wilson, a wealthy shipping magnate. When Gordon-Cumming was spotted apparently cheating during a game, the other players asked Edward what they should do. The prince encouraged them to confront Gordon-Cumming, who agreed to sign a document promising that he would never play cards again, so long as they told nobody what had occurred. Gordon-Cumming changed his mind about the agreement when, in 1891, allegations regarding his cheating were mysteriously leaked to the press. He demanded that the allegations against him be retracted and the matter ended up in court. Arthur Wilson was charged with defamation and Gordon-Cumming was determined to see his tarnished name cleared.

The trial became the hottest ticket in London and when Edward was called as a witness, the atmosphere in the courtroom was electric. It was the first time that an heir to the throne had been called to court since 1411 and Edward's evidence was as damning as the rest of the witnesses. The jury found against Gordon-Cumming and he was dismissed from the army and ostracised from the Marlborough House set. Yet although his side had won, for the first time, the prince knew what it was to be unpopular. He was seen as a man devoted to gambling and high-living who had destroyed the reputation of a brave soldier. Not only that, but the prince's critics wondered what else went on besides gambling and began to speculate about how the Marlborough House set might pass the time. Once an unashamed gambler, he reined in his love of the card table after that. Perhaps he decided that it was less troublesome to spend his time in the arms of lovers than playing games that could lead him to court!



ABOVE: IN THIS CARTOON FROM PUCK, A GARGANTUAN QUEEN VICTORIA READS A LIST OF EDWARD'S WRONGDOINGS TO HER ERRANT SON

A FAITHFUL WIFE

Whilst Edward VII played away, it was left to his wife to keep the home fires burning

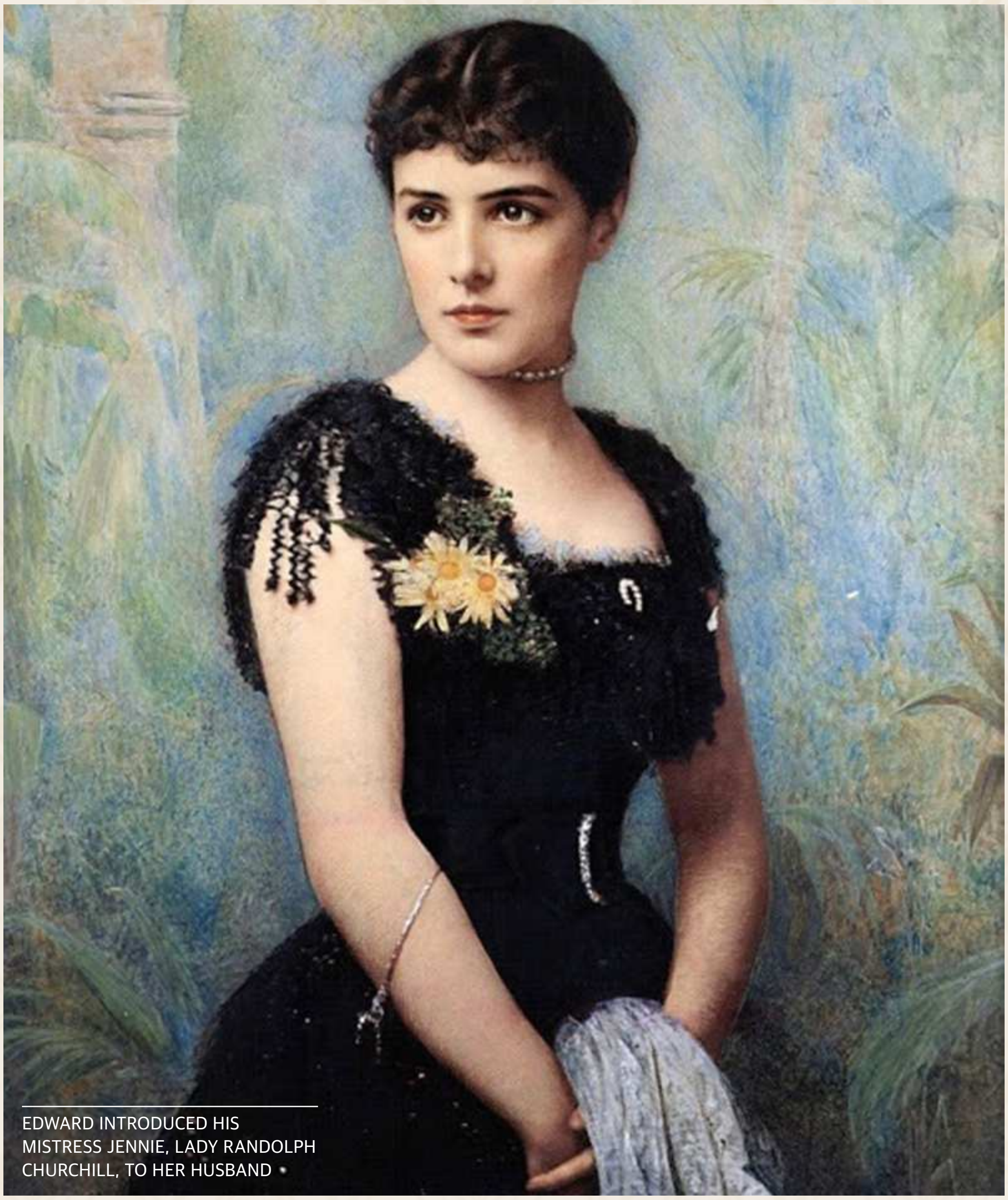
Alexandra of Denmark married Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1863. She wasn't Victoria and Albert's first choice thanks to the fact that Denmark and Prussia were in conflict but with few other choices open to them, eventually the match was made.

Despite Edward's infidelities, the couple were mostly happy and together they had six children. Keen on hunting, animals and society, Alexandra and Queen Victoria didn't always see eye to eye, but Alexandra assumed many of the official responsibilities that the old queen didn't feel able to take on. Though Alexandra was enormously popular, when her eldest son, Prince Albert Victor, died in his 20s she withdrew, suffering from intense grief.

As Princess of Wales and later as queen consort, Alexandra didn't only tolerate her husband's mistresses, but showed them kindness and understanding. When Edward was on his death bed and his devoted lover, Alice Keppel, wished to see him, Alexandra welcomed her into Buckingham Palace to say a final goodbye.

Alexandra nursed her husband through his final hours and following his death, devoted the rest of her life to philanthropy. She died in 1925 and was laid to rest beside the husband to whom she had remained forever faithful.

ABOVE: SEEN HERE WITH HER DAUGHTER, VICTORIA, ALEXANDRA TOOK HER HUSBAND'S INFIDELITIES ON THE CHIN AND DEVOTED HERSELF TO HER FAMILY



EDWARD INTRODUCED HIS MISTRESS JENNIE, LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, TO HER HUSBAND •

Although he had many lovers, three showed a particular devotion to Edward, or were able to prick at his social conscience. The first was Daisy Greville, Countess of Warwick, and she had just as many lovers as Edward. Daisy and the Prince of Wales were a couple for nine years and she was often seen at public engagements with the prince, taking advantage of her senior social rank to publicly accompany her lover when he was out and about. At wild parties at her Essex mansion she encouraged wife-swapping and sexual experimentation but at the same time, this dedicated pleasure seeker campaigned for social reform too. Trade unions met in her home and she ploughed her money into the fight for education and suffrage for women, using her status as a favourite of the Prince of Wales to open doors that might otherwise have remained shut. She wasn't afraid of calling on him to support those causes too, effectively becoming his first and loudest social conscience.

When his affair with Daisy Greville ended, the 56-year-old Prince of Wales then took Alice Keppel, the great-grandmother of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, as his mistress. Alice was more than 25 years Edward's junior and the couple made no real effort to conceal their relationship from her husband, who would make himself scarce whenever the prince came to visit his wife. The affair lasted through Edward's reign and up until his death, and during this time, Alice constantly tried to improve his lifestyle and health to the very end. She shared her lover with Agnes Keyser, a courtesan who devoted her public life to humanitarian efforts and who had converted her house into a hospital for the causalities of the Boer War. Agnes became friends with Alexandra, her lover's wife, and was, to all intents and purposes, the prince's last official mistress.

Despite his mother's damning opinion of him, Edward was a popular prince and a well-loved king. Having been subjected to stern discipline and rigid education in his youth, it's hardly surprising that he revelled against the very values his parents tried to instil in him and turned instead to a life of pleasure. That he managed to do so without incurring the lasting displeasure of the public is quite something.

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LOUIS & EDWINA MOUNTBATTEN

RUMOURS AND REGRETS

Louis Mountbatten enjoyed boasting of his achievements, usually with a dash of exaggeration. But as high as Mountbatten rose, his wife had no intention of letting anyone curtail her sexual passions and proclivities. The result was an unorthodox, but endlessly fascinating, marital union

Written by **Jon Wright**

Not many honeymooners got to star in their very own Charlie Chaplin movie; the recently hitched Mountbattens were among the lucky few. They had arranged to stay at the mock mansion ('Pickfair') owned by the most glamorous couple in Tinseltown, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. Mary and Douglas couldn't make it, but the Mountbattens were still given the run of the estate and, by any reckoning, Chaplin was an impressive stand-in host. He penned and directed a short one-reeler, *Nice and Friendly*, intended purely as a memento. The Mountbattens took leading roles.

It was the culmination of a delightful few months. Louis Mountbatten married Edwina Ashley at St Margaret's, Westminster, on 18 July 1922. The weather was lousy but the crowds turned out in force and the guest list was suitably impressive: the king and queen dusted off their finery and the Prince of Wales served as best man. Louis (a great-grandson of Queen Victoria) had significant, though not stratospheric, status on the European royal scene and had made a respectable start in his naval career. Edwina was set to inherit a fortune from her grandfather, the financier Ernest Cassel: a sizeable chunk of £300 million in today's money.

The young couple had first met at a Claridge's ball in 1920 and their habit of bumping into each other – a cruise off the Belgian coast, hosted by the mighty Vanderbilts, the regatta at Cowes, a shooting party in Scotland – allowed a gentle courtship to develop. The sweetest billets-doux passed back and forth and, given how things turned out, it is refreshing to gain a sense of innocence and straightforwardness pervading this early stage of their relationship.

With the wedding behind them, Louis (known to all as 'Dickie') and Edwina simply jumped into their Rolls Royce Silver Ghost and drove off to see the sights. They took in Paris and called on various notables, including the king and queen of Spain, then it was time for the American leg of their honeymoon. Niagara Falls was nice to look at, the encounter with Chaplin was a hoot, but New York City was the star attraction. The Mountbattens stayed with the lofty Vanderbilts, finding time to chat with Jerome Kern, watch Babe Ruth strutting his stuff on the baseball field, and become addicted to the roller coaster on Coney Island. They rode it at least nine times. Soon it was time to return to Brook House in Mayfair, the well-appointed home inherited from Edwina's grandfather. All seemed to be set fair, but the sailing became rough very, very quickly.

When Edwina was bored, she became petulant and argumentative. Stimulating conversation and foreign trips helped to fend off the blues, but nothing worked quite so well as the men. Edwina almost immediately became cross with Dickie's lengthy naval tours, and a string of lovers seemed like the obvious solution. An old friend, Hugh Molyneux, was first up, followed by the wealthy, polo-playing and rather caddish American 'Laddie' Sanford. Others came and went, and often overlapped. Edwina's promiscuity (and that truly is the appropriate word) was nicely summed up in an endlessly quoted anecdote. Lady Mountbatten is said to have returned from a shopping spree only to be confronted by a frantic maid. "Mr Larry

LEFT: ON THEIR WEDDING DAY IN JULY 1922, THE MOUNTBATTENS SEEMED LIKE A HAPPY COUPLE, BUT BENEATH THE SMILING VENEER THEY HAD A VERY UNCONVENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

THE MOUNTBATTENS, PICTURED HERE IN THE YEAR OF THEIR WEDDING

ABOVE: THE GLAMOROUS AND CROWD-PLEASING MOUNTBATTEN WEDDING IN JULY 1922

“THE STIRRINGS OF AN AFFAIR WITH DICKIE ARE USUALLY TRACED TO A STEAMY WALTZ”

Gray is in the drawing room,” she explained, “Mr Sanford is in the library, Mr Ted Phillips is in the boudoir, Señor Portago is in the ante-room, and I don’t know what to do with Mr Molyneux.”

Lord Mountbatten heard about all this – it was hard to miss when Edwina’s callers kept on calling even when Dickie was in town – and there is ample evidence of his rage and jealousy. But he put up with it, writing letters to Edwina declaring that he wished he could give her more, and receiving replies in which she apologised for behaving in so “beastly” a fashion. Matters became very serious, however, when Edwina was named as the adulterous co-respondent in a petition for divorce. She was probably blameless on this occasion but it took a good deal of hard work and cash to make the case disappear.

It was quite the scare, and at some point in the early 1930s the Mountbattens reached a formal understanding. Edwina would have to be more discreet in her liaisons (something she never quite managed) and, while the couple would still be loyal and supportive friends, the physical side of the marriage had probably run its course. Edwina was to be allowed her affairs and Dickie would be allowed to stray as well.

In its way, this was a reasonable solution. The Mountbattens had already managed to produce two daughters – Patricia in 1924 and Pamela in 1929 – while divorce was simply not an option. It was a taboo subject within the royal family and it would have ruined Dickie. Rumours of future affairs would inevitably surface but, if Edwina took a little extra care, they would only circulate among members of the Mountbattens’ crowd, who ‘understood’ this sort of thing. Success rested largely on the Mountbattens’ choice of partners. The wife of a French media bigwig and a jolly Englishman with a talent for gift-giving would soon set a very high standard.

Yola Letellier had striking looks, of the gamine variety, and a husband, Henri, who was 40 years her senior. Henri was the publisher of the influential *Le Journal* and former mayor of Deauville. Yola was popular with some fashion photographers and is said to have been the inspiration for Colette’s novel *Gigi*. The stirrings of an affair with Dickie are usually traced to a steamy waltz, danced one evening in 1932. The relationship lasted for decades and, while other lovers came and went, it was a source of great comfort for Mountbatten.

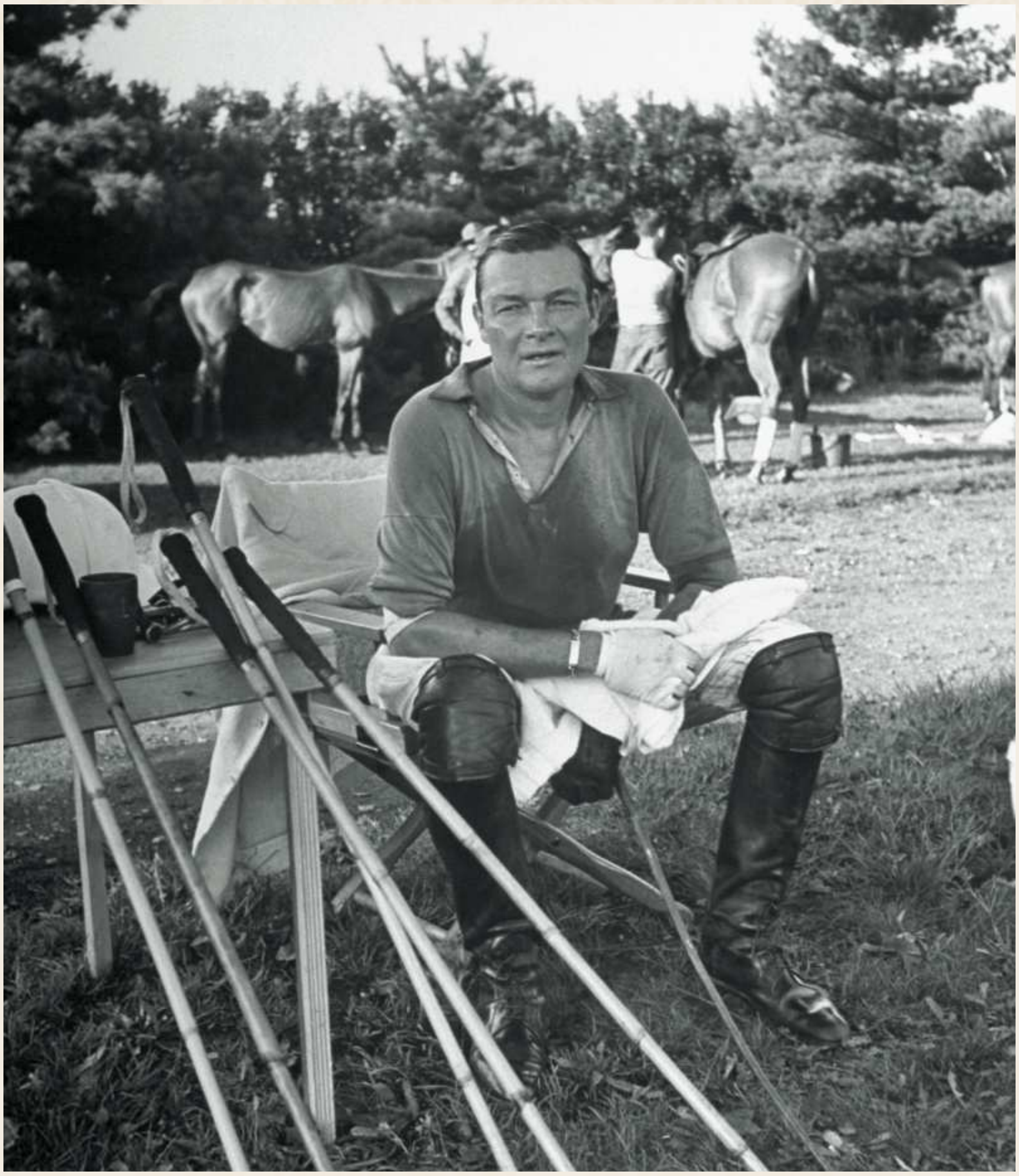
With staggering hypocrisy, Edwina was wildly jealous when she first learned of the affair. She pretended to befriend Yola and invited her on a trip to Austria. She was fully aware that Dickie had arranged some leave so that he could make a surprise visit to see his lover: all that greeted him when he reached France was a note explaining that Yola was away. In later years Edwina and Yola appear to have developed a good relationship, but there is room to wonder how much sincerity can be credited to Lady Mountbatten.

As for Edwina, she always relished the flings but she does seem to have become capable of more lasting and meaningful affairs. Harold 'Bunny' Phillips was just the man for the job. The relationship began in 1933 and Bunny quickly became a regular visitor to the Mountbattens' home. The Coldstream Guard was, according to Edwina's daughter Pamela, "thrillingly handsome with perfect posture". He showered the girls with gifts and letters, called them Princess Plink and Plonk, and did wonders for the mood of the house. As Pamela put it: "We loved having Bunny at home. Quite simply he made my mother easier to be around and he genuinely loved being with my sister and me." It was all rather unconventional, but Pamela insisted that this extended family (Yola sent lots of gifts, too) "greatly enriched my life".

It all seems very civilised – lovers popping by, joining family holidays, and so forth – but a number of bumpy moments had to be endured. In 1932, *The People* newspaper ran a story under the headline "Society Shaken by Terrible Scandal". It referred to an affair between an eminent, wealthy English lady and a famous "coloured man" in the entertainment business. No names were named but it was widely assumed that Edwina and the singer and actor Paul Robeson were the parties in question. Edwina sued successfully, though she declined any financial reparation. *The People* made a full retraction and, in its way, this all fitted the goals of the Mountbattens' arrangement. The story was out there and was dealt with efficiently.

The waters are muddied by the fact that the West Indian pianist Leslie 'Hutch' Hutchinson, not Robeson, might have been the man hinted

BELOW: STEPHEN 'LADDIE' SANFORD, THE WEALTHY, GALLIVANTING AMERICAN POLO PLAYER WAS ONE OF EDWINA'S LOVERS DURING THE 1920S



ON HOLIDAY WITH THE MOUNTBATTENS

The fluctuating behaviour during vacations and their reactions to visiting guests were useful barometers of the Mountbattens' marriage

There were two sides to Edwina the holiday-maker. She really wasn't up to snuff when it came to the children: when they were little she tended to zip off on her own or leave them in a hotel with a nanny. There were compensations, though. During one of her longer vacations, the girls enjoyed collecting exotic stamps from the letters mum sent home: from Bangkok, Hawaii, Calcutta, Baghdad and Cairo.

Edwina was much more accomplished on the romantic front. She sometimes made efforts to convince Dickie that she and her latest flame were part of a larger group of holidayers, which was intended, one imagines, to soften the blow to his ego. Both Mountbattens grew accustomed to one of their lovers tagging along and Edwina even took Yola Letellier on vacations just for the two of them.

In Budapest, where Yola received medical treatment, the two women shared a room. "I do hope you're not jealous," Edwina wrote to her husband. There was cruelty in that remark. Dickie tended to respectfully buzz off when one of his wife's lovers came to town or joined a holiday party. Not so, Edwina. "We are all such friends that it is fun being together," Dickie once wrote, "but there are times when it is fun being alone. Just as you wept with disappointment when circumstances meant that I was going to be home the first evening that you and Jawaharlal were going to be together, I sometimes feel I'd like to be alone with Yola." *That* remark was riddled with frustration.

ABOVE: NEHRU AND EDWINA PREPARING FOR ONE OF THEIR DAYS OF WALKING AND TALKING DURING THE 1948 HOLIDAY IN SIMLA; DICKIE WAS AROUND THE PLACE, TOO, BUT USUALLY KEPT TO HIMSELF

ABOVE: WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDWINA AND NEHRU, PICTURED HERE TOGETHER?

at in *The People*'s story. Edwina adored Hutch, was engaged in an erratic but decades-long relationship with him, and was apt to forget the rules of discretion in his company. She would follow him around on tour like some groupie and shower him with lavish gifts: they included an inscribed gold cigarette case and (less conventionally) a diamond-encrusted penis sheath, specially commissioned from Cartier. Hutchinson was certainly one of the lovers that got under Lord Mountbatten's skin. Dickie was seen, very drunk, at Quaglino's one evening cursing Hutch and deploying the 'N'-word with abandon. Much later, in 1949, the Mountbattens were arriving at the Dorchester just as Hutchinson was leaving. "Oh, darling, you must remember Hutch," said Edwina. Dickie could only manage an angry, "Good God, I thought he was dead!"

> “NEHRU AND EDWINA CONSTANTLY EXCHANGED LETTERS AND TRINKETS”

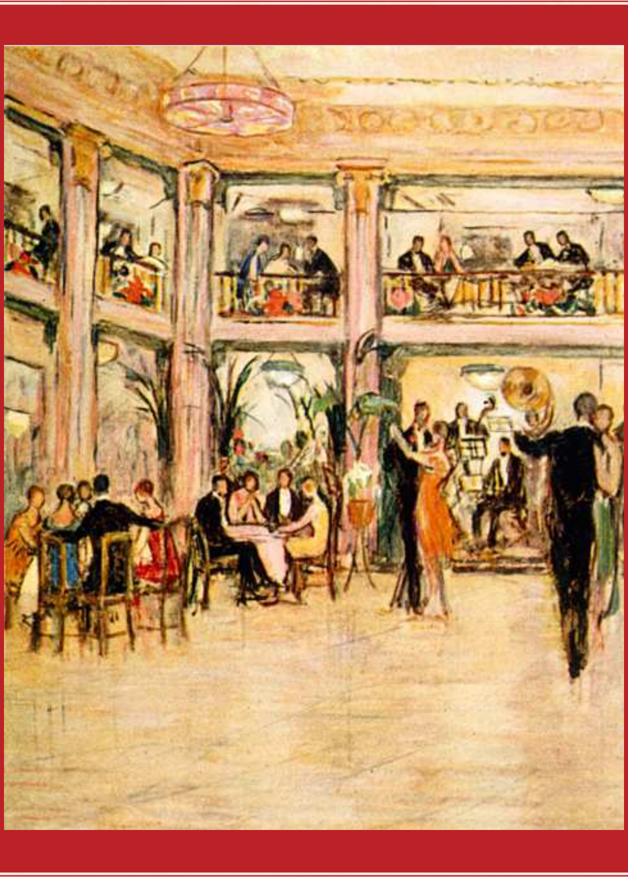
Other puzzles emerged over the next couple of decades. There was nothing remotely unclear about some of Edwina's dalliances. Her occasional sexual adventures with the composer Malcolm Sargent appear, for instance, to have been common knowledge. Just a little later, however, the real mystery man made his entrance: his name was Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India.

Dickie was in India to serve as viceroy and oversee the swift completion of independence, and he stayed on for a while as the new dominion's first governor-general. During this time Edwina and Nehru became very close, talking for hours and meeting whenever possible. It has often been argued that they sustained a deeply spiritual but never carnal bond.

However, there is now a wealth of evidence that points towards physical intimacy. The letters between the two often give this impression and many in India at the time seem to have assumed the couple were having sex: lots of people claim to have seen lots of things. Not dwelling on the issue was chiefly a matter of respect and political common sense in an already troubled nation. Over the next decade, Nehru and Edwina constantly exchanged letters and trinkets and tried to reunite whenever possible. During Nehru's 1948 trip to London, they squeezed in a theatre trip to see Euripides' *Medea*, the Lord Mayor's Banquet and a dinner at an out-of-the-way Greek restaurant in Soho. None of this undermines the profoundly intellectual and spiritual connection between Nehru and Edwina, but there was probably more to the relationship than sitting on benches and contemplating cosmic matters. In any event, when Edwina was buried at sea in 1960, Nehru sent an Indian frigate to the funeral and charged its commander with casting a single wreath of marigolds into the water.

DEPRAVITY-VILLE

Foxtrots led to flirting, which led to lord know's what. Upper-crust London Society during the 1920s wasn't nearly as outrageous as it liked to think it was, but it provided an ideal playground for someone like Edwina Mountbatten



Life at Brook Street, serving as her grandfather's hostess, had been pleasant but stifling for Edwina. Marriage was like emerging from a cocoon. On one trip to America, referring to Edwina, her friend Jean Norton and the Prince of Wales, Frances Donaldson noted that "there's was a fairly raffish society". And how!

Edwina became a feature at London's most fashionable clubs: the Embassy on Old Bond Street, the Kit-Cat on the Haymarket and, a particular favourite, the makeshift Grafton Galleries, where huge crowds were crammed into a small space and cheeks met cheeks with alarming regularity. Not everyone was delighted by the explosion of London nightlife. One clergyman associated them with the "morals of the pigsty" while a puritanical Home Secretary, William Joynson-Hicks, declared war on this "blot on the life of London". He was joined in his crusade by the Commissioner of Police and the bishop of London.

Only a few dozen significant prosecutions, usually for selling alcohol after hours, materialised between 1924 and 1929, so Edwina was still able to dance a particularly risqué Charleston with Fred Astaire, flirt and pet as she saw fit, and become part of what the participants regarded as a daring, sophisticated lifestyle. Hardly anyone seemed to realise that if anything truly dionysian had taken hold most of them would have run a mile. The jazz, though, was very good.

LEFT: A 1926 SKETCH OF THE KIT-CAT CLUB, A PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN IF YOUR SOCIAL STATUS OR CELEBRITY GRANTED YOU ADMISSION

EDWINA DID LITTLE TO HIDE HER EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS FROM HER HUSBAND RIGHT UP UNTIL HER DEATH

As for Dickie's love life, we also encounter our share of hotly debated topics. He clearly had his share of sexual urges and, alongside various affairs, there is vaguer talk of his penchant for seducing young naval wives. After Edwina's death, he even became a client of the celebrated Paris-based Madame Claude, call-girl provider to the stars. Mountbatten apparently indulged in mischief with Madame Claude's girls as he circled over Paris in Baron Elie de Rothschild's private jet.

But did men appeal to Mountbatten just as much as women? Many have suggested that Dickie was bisexual and it is entirely possible, but pinning down names is tricky. Noël Coward comes up a lot, but he was probably just a very close and long-standing friend who happened to be gay. Coward cherished his holidays with Dickie. One trip involved chugging up and down the Mediterranean and Coward concluded that "life on a flagship is the acme of grandeur". The ensuing thank you note was decidedly cheeky, with Mountbatten being addressed as "dear dainty darling", but that was just Coward's way. His famous film, *In Which We Serve*, had a conspicuously Mountbatten-esque heroic character, but so what? Coward liked his friend and thought he was pretty, and the favour was probably returned.

Other contenders for the role of bisexual lover are more convincing. The left-leaning MP Tom Driberg, and Dickie's friend from Cambridge days, Peter Murphy, who was effectively a lodger with the Mountbattens for long spells, are probably the best horses to back. A reasonable conclusion is that Mountbatten had lots of gay acquaintances: some of them, such as Ivor Novello and Terrence Rattigan, were probably just friends while others may have been lovers. It is difficult to decide because of all the hazy reminiscences: Dickie's driver swore that he often saw Mountbatten visiting the Red House gay brothel in Rabat, while the gossipy memoirs of Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd recall that Dickie's "tiny mews house seemed awash with young, muscular and suspiciously good-looking naval rankings bustling about the place to no apparent purpose".

In any event, there would have been nothing wrong with Mountbatten sleeping with men, whatever the era's self-styled arbiters of morality might have said. Everything becomes more troubling when the issue of Mountbatten's specific sexual tastes enters the picture. The talk began in the early 1960s when Baronness Decies told the FBI that the Mountbattens were "considered people of very low morals" and, that Lord Mountbatten was "known to be a homosexual with a perversion for small boys". Over the coming years, the Bureau collected additional information concerning Dickie and forwarded much of it to the British authorities. This, in and of itself, proves nothing: if you look hard enough, you can find an FBI file somewhere that says just about anything. But we must also consider the claims of those who say they were victims of abuse. Two former charges of the Kincora Boys' Home in Belfast insist, for instance, that in 1977, when aged 16, they were taken to the holiday home of a distinguished gentleman staying in Mullaghmore. They say that they only recognised the man as Mountbatten when his face was all over the news following his violent death in 1979. The wise approach, here, is to look at such accusations very closely but, equally, to avoid any rush to judgement.

RIGHT: A RATHER DESOLATE SCENE OF THE FUNERAL OF LADY MOUNTBATTEN, A BURIAL AT SEA, IN 1960

BELOW RIGHT: PRINCE PHILIP PICTURED WITH LORD AND LADY MOUNTBATTEN UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN MALTA IN 1949

© Alamy, Getty Images,

GEORGE, DUKE OF KENT

THE MISADVENTURES OF GOOD TIME GEORGE

If you were fourth in line to the throne, there was scope to take a more relaxed approach to your public persona: Prince George seized the opportunity with both hands but as he matured, signs of a more serious, dutiful man began to emerge without any significant damage to his legendary charisma

Written by **Jon Wright**

George, Duke of Kent, and his wife, Marina of Greece, shared a taste for the finer things in life. Such, at any rate, was the impression given by an auction of the couple's sumptuous belongings held at Christie's in November 2009. Deep-pocketed bidders could opt for a set of 18 George II and George III silver dining plates (they sold for a whopping £23,750), two George III mahogany benches, which cost someone £163,000, or a brace of William IV wine-coolers, which flew past their reserve and managed to achieve £121,250.

All of this may sound hopelessly self-indulgent but, let's remember, the Kents had lots of space to fill. Their Regency-era house on London's ultra-fashionable Belgrave Square stretched over five stories and the couple, who had tied the knot in November 1934, saw little harm in making a few improvements. When you lived on Belgrave Square in the 1930s, keeping up with the neighbours took on a whole new meaning. Properties owned by the Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Bedford were all just a stone's throw from the Kents' doorstep at number three.

LEFT: WITH RAKISH GOOD LOOKS AND CHARM, PRINCE GEORGE WAS CONSIDERED QUITE THE CATCH

But if the living had been high, it had not always been easy. George came to his marriage with a spectacularly checkered past, filled with tales of drugs and sexual shenanigans. We can at least be confident that Marina knew what she was taking on. Everyone knew, and some had even found the prince's antics rather endearing.

Born on the Sandringham estate in 1902, George pursued a predictable royal education, culminating in spells at the naval colleges in Osborne and Dartmouth. He was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant in 1924, promoted to full lieutenant in 1926, and remained on active service until 1929. George hated naval life and, from 1929, pursued an unorthodox, but still respectable, career in the Civil Service, working at the Foreign Office and the Home Office. A typical account from June 1929 explained that the prince's "Foreign Office hours are from 11 o'clock to six o'clock, and he follows the routine of the FO in every respect, though he is near enough to Buckingham Palace to run home for lunch instead of taking the midday meal in the official canteen or a neighbouring club, as is the usual custom". The true miracle, on many days, was that George had managed to make it into the office at all. By 1929, his sybaritic excesses had begun to take their toll.

Prince George (he acquired the ducal title just before his marriage) knew how to enjoy himself, usually in the company of his brother Edward (who, being higher up the pecking order, might have demonstrated more decorum). Edward and George were cut from similar cloth. They both enjoyed sex, jazz, drinking, cars and sport, and from the late 1920s they had established a lively bachelor pad at York House. Years later, Edward wrote that "although George was eight-and-a-half years my junior, I found in his character qualities that were akin to my own. We became more than brothers – we became friends."

They were a familiar sight at the capital's finest tailors and insisted that their slicked-down hair was tended to at the legendary barber shops of Geo F Trumper. None of this came cheap. One receipt from Anderson & Sheppard shows George purchasing a charcoal wool pinstripe double-breasted suit by Lardini for £342 (this down from the usual £685 price tag, which would have the purchasing power of more than £30,000 today). George was also partial to a night out, meeting his heroes like Duke Ellington and Ira Gershwin. Although if, through the late 1920s and early 1930s, George spent far too much time at the chicest night spots – Quaglino's, the Kit-Cat Club and, especially, the Embassy Club – this did not represent any kind of scandal. George was apt to be rowdy but one club owner, speaking in 1927, didn't seem to mind. The prince was "his favourite" because of a "lack of anything like self-consciousness". Some "young men may be blasé," he continued, "and a good many of our young women, but, for unaffected enjoyment of life and complete absence of 'side,' give me Prince George".

"BY 1929, GEORGE'S ADDICTION WAS REACHING CRISIS POINT AND EDWARD STEPPED IN AS UNLIKELY SAVIOUR"

In the end, how bad could the consequences of a self-indulgent life be? A sore head the next morning? Well, in fact, matters could become much more serious. Enter the 'girl with the silver syringe'. Kiki Whitney Preston emerged as one of the darlings of Kenya's hedonistic Happy Valley set during the mid-1920s. She indulged in more than her share of extra-marital affairs and, as everyone knew, if you wanted drugs, Kiki was your woman. George fell under her spell and soon found himself addicted to cocaine, morphine and other substances. George's brother Edward and other members of the royal family became deeply concerned about Kiki's influence: she also managed to recruit George in a ménage à trois with Jorge Ferrara, the bisexual son of an Argentinian ambassador, and would later claim George had fathered her son, Michael Temple Canfield.

By 1929, George's addiction was reaching crisis point – it may well have been one of the reasons for leaving active naval duty – and Edward stepped in as an unlikely saviour. He essentially had Kiki exiled from England and whisked George away for rehabilitation. Edward was a genuinely tender carer, sitting by his brother's bed, often knitting during the worst patches of recovery. A detective was assigned to track George's movements and his telephone was sometimes disconnected to keep the temptations of the outside world at bay.

It is likely that George suffered from relapses when it came to drugs and he never entirely lost his affection for Kiki. In 1932, the pair met, quite accidentally, in Cannes and George had to be physically bundled away from the scene. The back of George's drug addiction did seem to have been broken, however, though he retained another flaw that was equally capable of provoking scandal and rumour. The royal eye had, shall we say, a tendency to wander.

Behind the devil-may-care exterior, Prince George was quite a cultured man. He knew his way around an art gallery and probably read more than George V's other sons combined. An invitation to speak at a book trade luncheon in 1932 was just his cup of tea but the audience was perhaps a little dumbfounded by what he had to say. He was "sickened" by novels that displayed "a disproportionate interest in sex" and suggested that many of them "should have been operated upon for gangrene at a point approximately two-thirds of the way through". A wholesome sentiment, no doubt, but to have so renowned

THE DAZZLING DUCHESS

Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark had as much royal blood flowing through her veins as anyone in Europe. For the Duke of Kent, she was quite the catch

At a diplomatic reception just a few days before Marina's wedding to George, the Soviet ambassador commented that she "looked charming to me, much better than she did in the newspapers: a blonde with luxurious hair, a rosy complexion, bright eyes, thin and refined". George, the ambassador added, "isn't bad either… tall, slender… with a pleasant face" and "the most handsome of the king's sons" even if "he stoops a little". The wedding was a great success, though the run-up had not always gone smoothly. One contemporary dreaded the "horde of minor royalty about to descend on London" and his fears were not unjustified. "One of the grand dukes," he claimed, "may be too much attached to the Palace champagne" while another had an annoying habit of pocketing silver spoons. There was "not much enthusiasm in exalted quarters with the entourage of the charming little princess". By contrast, Marina herself was a hit. She made attempts to tame her husband, proved to be a good mother to her children (Edward, Alexandra and Michael) and, both before and after her time with George, emerged as a refined but stylish fashion icon. The Kents were never going to have a straightforward marriage but they seemed to have been happy enough, in their way. At the very least, the foreign holidays – beginning with a three-month Caribbean honeymoon in early 1935 – were often great fun.

ABOVE: DOMESTIC BLISS, OR SOMETHING SIMILAR – MARINA, GEORGE AND TWO OF THEIR CHILDREN, PRINCE EDWARD AND PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

LEFT: THE DUKE OF KENT, IN PARTICULARLY DASHING FORM, IN 1935

BELOW: THE DUKE AND DUCHESS ON THEIR WEDDING DAY. FOLLOWING THE BIG PERFORMANCE AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY A SECOND CEREMONY WAS HELD, ACCORDING TO THE GREEK RITE, IN A PRIVATE CHAPEL AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

a playboy grumbling about “a disproportionate interest in sex” must have seemed a little rich.

The list of flings and more enduring affairs is long, and it is often devilishly tricky to separate rumour from reality. Few would now question the existence of a lengthy and meaningful relationship with the playwright Noël Coward. They were certainly close friends for two decades and, almost certainly, lovers from time to time. Coward dismissed the entanglement later in life, as “a little dalliance” but it was much more than that. Credence can also be lent to the idea of George’s affairs with the American cabaret star Florence Mills, the English actor Jessie Matthews, and – later on – the socialite Ethel Margaret Whigham (the future Duchess of Argyll). Some relationships almost crossed over into more serious territory. George appears to have considered the banking heiress Helen Poppy Baring (who had earlier sent Edward’s pulse racing) as a possible wife. His parents thought the idea ridiculous.

We can at least conclude that George appears to have had broad tastes, ranging – by some accounts – from Barbara Cartland (who sometimes claimed that George was the father of her daughter Raine) to the art expert and future Soviet spy Anthony Blunt. Many other names entered the frame (see panel), though all we sometimes have is gossip and innuendo. Was there something rather knowing in Tallulah Bankhead’s comment on George’s frequent visits to see her perform on the London stage? “He used to drop in to see me caper in the second act at least once a week.”

Marriage was bound to change things a little, but it is a stretch to suppose that George abandoned womanising entirely. As well as talk of the future Duchess of Argyll, much was made of a supposed fling with the American boogie-woogie pianist Edythe Baker in 1937 and sometimes George’s reputation was all that was needed to get the presses rolling. Also in 1937, *The Express* ran a story under the headline “Who is Mrs Allen?”. The pair had been spotted visiting the Ludgate Circus establishment of phrenologist Evelyn Bool and George had reluctantly agreed to have his head read. The diagnosis was excellent – “a real English head... fine brains, Dresden china quality” but the ensuing media onslaught was most unwelcome. Mrs Allen, formerly Paula Gellibrand, was an old friend of George (so earlier trysts cannot be discounted), and now the wife of William D E

ABOVE LEFT: GEORGE AND HIS BROTHER EDWARD LOOKING SUITABLY CHUMMY WHILE IN BIARRITZ IN 1932

ABOVE MIDDLE: THE TWO PRINCES ATTENDING A PREMIERE IN 1932

GEORGE'S DESCENT INTO DRUG USE COULD HAVE DEVELOPED INTO A TALE OF TRAGEDY AND DESTITUTION IF HIS BROTHER EDWARD HADN'T STEPPED IN TO LOOK AFTER HIM

Allen. The duke had popped round to their flat, offered Paula a lift and, as one Australian paper put it; "harmless events were seized upon and magnified and doctored by scandalmongers". Who knows? But Mr Allen was not taking it sitting down so he wrote a letter to *The Times* denouncing the "reckless exploitation of other people's private lives", and noting that his elderly mother did not deserve to be sent into a state of nervous exhaustion because of all the press phone calls and unprompted knocks on the front door.

As for the duke's wife, she seems to have taken all the gossip in her stride. The Duchess of Kent was something of a live-wire herself and the Bedford Square house witnessed a fair amount of carousing through the 1930s. Marina was not one to hold a grudge and was more than capable of teasing George's former partners. She once took an affectionate shot at Noël Coward (with whom she got on very well) by saying "You were almost a king's mistress, weren't you?". That said, there were soon two sons and a daughter to consider. In this arena, George scores well and there is something rather touching about the 1935 report of his struggling with a pram. "The other morning, to the admiration of all observers, the Duke of Kent was seen in the gardens of Belgrave Square, in charge of his baby son's perambulator". It was good to see that the modern father "saw no reason why they should not take their babies, perambulators and all, for an outing".

Moreover, edging towards respectability was becoming something of a priority during the mid-to-late-1930s. Another brother was managing to corner the market in royal scandal and political events on the continent were cause for ever-escalating concern. A duke, not a flamboyant man-about-town, was required.

Even during his wastrel days, George had sometimes exhibited a firm sense of duty and a capacity for hard work. He had found the Home Office to be a stimulating environment especially – as unlikely as this may sound – during his time with the factory inspectorate. He genuinely enjoyed trips to places like the enormous Leyland plant in May 1931, where the latest line in crankshafts piqued his interest. When the factories department held a 100th anniversary dinner in 1933, George was delighted to attend – though the enthusiasm of his guest, his brother Edward, might have been less conspicuous. Nor could George dodge his role in the endless round of royal functions and appearances but, notably during the three-month, 4,000-mile tour of South Africa in 1934, he made a decent fist of flying the flag.

With the changing of the guard in January 1936, the new king, Edward VIII, immediately made his expectations clear to George and Henry, Duke of Gloucester: "If you two think, now that I have taken this job on, you can go on behaving just as you have… you're very much mistaken". Not that George and Henry were given much time to prove themselves. All too soon, the furore over Edward's relationship with Wallis Simpson came to a head and, in the events leading up to Edward's abdication, George proved to be a key player.

For the Duke of Kent, the matter was very simple. Any idea of the king of England marrying someone like Wallis and continuing to serve as monarch was flatly absurd. George witnessed his brother's bizarre mood swings at first hand. At one moment Edward was consumed by anguish and

Wiki;Theatre Magazine

"WHILE KENT WOULD HAVE BOUGHT CHARISMA TO THE ROLE, HIS PAST WAS AN INSUPERABLE OBSTACLE"

resignation; at the next he was announcing that everything would work out just fine. Tellingly, George was kept at arm's length from the late summer of 1936 (perhaps because Wallis did not want him whispering in Edward's ear) but in late November, George was able to speak to a king who was deep in denial. Imagine you do marry her, George said, what on earth are you going to call her? A hopelessly over-confident Edward offered a stubborn reply: "What do you think! Queen of England, of course, and Empress of India, the whole bag of tricks."

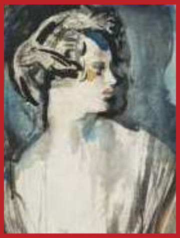
This, of course, was pie in the sky thinking and, by December, Edward would be signing the legal apparatus that brought his tenure as monarch to an end. It has sometimes been suggested that there was talk of dynastic leapfrogging and offering the monarchy to the Duke of Kent. Evidence of this idea being taken seriously is hard to come by and, while Kent would have brought greater charisma to the role, his past was an insuperable obstacle. Besides, George VI's reign still presented George with exciting prospects. One particularly enticing career move – which could have been the making of the duke – was to serve as governor-general of Australia. When his appointment was announced in late 1938 (he planned to take up his duties in November 1939), Australia went George-crazy and official preparations moved along very swiftly. Then Mr Hitler managed to spoil the party. In late September, George wrote to the Australian PM: "As I am still of age for active service, I have rejoined the Royal Navy". It was with "keen disappointment" that he and the duchess would have to abandon their move to the wide brown land. War was looming.

George's earlier feelings towards Germany remain a little unclear: he certainly preferred some kind of compromise to the prospect of conflict, he was eager to serve as some kind of intermediary, and he may possibly have found some aspects of Nazi ideology interesting. This had changed by 1939. As he wrote to his brother-in-law, Prince-Regent Paul of Yugoslavia, "What a hell of a world we live in, with evil pushing its way everywhere". This was a dejected but mature adjudication and it demonstrated just how far George had come from the carefree days of spilling out of nightclubs in the early hours. It was a shame, therefore, that the duke had little time to test his metal. He would not have a good war, but that is another story…

THE GEORGIAN CONQUESTS

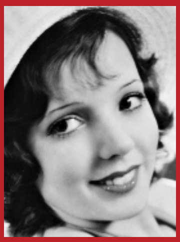
The word 'insatiable' might have been invented to describe the sexual appetites of the young Prince George, but is it possible to tell the difference between genuine affairs and idle gossip?

David Lindsey, Earl of Crawford, told a tale about Prince George seeking his father's advice about a potential bride-to-be. The king promised to think about it. "So long," according to Lindsey, "that the prince got tired and… got mixed up with some pretty young parcel". Here are a few of the 'parcels', adding to the names discussed in the main article, that George may or may not have unwrapped.



Lois Sturt

Lois was among the most glamorous and reckless of George's social crowd. Daughters of barons were not, after all, supposed to be arrested at 2am in Regent's Park for hurtling around in a car at 50mph. Her beauty was, however, legendary and she is seen here in a wonderful portrait by Ambrose McEvoy.



Jessie Matthews

The woman who defined 'cute' for a generation was a long-term friend of George's, and most likely a good deal more. Jessie Matthews' acting was not stellar and her voice was mediocre, though she did secure some impressive coups, such as being the first to give a public performance of Cole Porter's 'Let's Do It.'

Gloria Swanson

Gloria was described by Cecil B DeMille as "the movie star of movie stars". Here we see her, in 1930, blending mystery and glamour but one has the feeling that an affair with George was largely the product of the Hollywood gossip hype machine.

Louis Ferdinand

If true, George's relationship with Louis Ferdinand was among his riskiest amorous adventures. Dallying with a Prussian prince, and a distant cousin to boot, would not have gone down well with royal families at either end of the continent. Then again, this photo from 1927 does reveal Louis Ferdinand as quite the looker.

BOTTOM OPPOSITE PAGE: NOËL COWARD, SEEN HERE PERFORMING WITH GERTRUDE LAWRENCE

© Alamy, Getty Images

PRINCESS MARGARET

A FORBIDDEN LOVER

Beautiful, wealthy and spoiled, Princess Margaret wanted for nothing – so why was her love for a dashing war hero doomed to fail?

Written by **Catherine Curzon**

Once upon a time, there lived a princess who had almost everything that a girl could dream of. Beautiful, privileged and the envy of everyone who knew her, all that was missing to complete the happy picture was a real-life prince charming. And who better to fulfil the role than a hero of the Royal Air Force who was as handsome as she was lovely; a man with a chestful of medals and the trust of the king himself? For the princess and her Spitfire ace this should have been a fairy tale come true, yet the tangled, tragic love life of the late Princess Margaret never truly found its happy ending.

Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret Rose was born in 1930 to Albert and Elizabeth, the quietly domesticated Duke and Duchess of York who shunned the social whirlwind she would later plunge into. Margaret's elder sister was a young lady named Elizabeth, better known to us today as Queen Elizabeth II. To their parents, however, Margaret and Elizabeth were simply Margot and Lilibet, the daughters they adored.

During Princess Margaret's idyllic childhood, there was no suggestion that she would one day be the daughter of a king, let alone the sister of the longest-reigning monarch in British history.

LEFT: PRINCESS MARGARET AS PHOTOGRAPHED BY HER HUSBAND ANTONY ARMSTRONG-JONES IN 1959. SHE WAS A CELEBRATED BEAUTY WHO WON THE HEART OF HER LATE FATHER'S EQUERRY, BUT WHEN THEIR ROMANCE BECAME KNOWN IT WAS FORBIDDEN TO CONTINUE

Fate, however, has a habit of moving in the most mysterious ways and, in 1936, romance brought scandal to the House of Windsor.

Less than 11 months after he ascended the throne, King Edward VIII abdicated. Passionately in love with American divorcee Wallis Simpson, Edward was faced with a choice between romance and duty. The king famously chose to follow his heart, turning his back on royal privilege to be with the woman he adored. When Margaret faced the same decision years later, her conclusion was not so romantic.

As Edward left England to start his new life, the world changed forever for those he left behind. Margaret's father was a timid, shy, man who famously struggled to control a debilitating stammer and certainly had no ambitions to rule as king. Yet he knew that he could not refuse the role that duty now demanded him to take and, in December 1936, was enthroned as King George VI.

At just six years old, Margaret Rose was no longer simply the daughter of a shy, unassuming duke. Now she was second in line to the throne itself and the quiet life she enjoyed at 145 Piccadilly was over. The royal family took up residence in Buckingham Palace, yet Elizabeth and Margaret, though suddenly catapulted to the forefront of public attention, found their lives little changed as the days went by.

The new king and queen did all they could to ensure that their daughters enjoyed as normal a childhood as possible. They attended Brownies and visited family, remaining safely out of the public eye. The girls were educated as young ladies and spoiled rotten by their doting parents, especially King George VI. While young Elizabeth was prepared for the role that one day awaited her, Margaret had no such burden to bear and the world lay at her feet.

As Margaret blossomed into a young woman, she began to indulge her love of glamour and the finer things in life. Slender, graceful and as beautiful as any fairy-tale princess, she had a passion for fashion and whether sparkling on the red carpet or indulging in her beloved philanthropic events, she delighted in being the centre of attention. Margaret also had a keen intelligence and a sharp, biting wit; people longed to be part of her circle, and she was soon at the heart of society. Although she was not yet an adult, it was clear that Margaret would one day be a most eligible princess indeed.

When Princess Margaret was 17, she accompanied her parents on an official visit to South Africa; it was to be a fateful trip. For the duration of the visit, Margaret was chaperoned by Group Captain Peter Townsend, a 33-year-old former RAF officer who was one of the king's most trusted equerries. Townsend was a bona fide war hero, a character cut from the mould of a matinee idol. Handsome, assured and urbane, he had won the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1940 for his heroic deeds. Townsend flew in the Battle of Britain, even surviving a ditch into the ocean. His

ABOVE: THE PRINCESS PHOTOGRAPHED BY VICTOR BLACKMAN AS SHE ARRIVES BACK ON ENGLISH SOIL AFTER TRAVELLING IN CANADA

OPPOSITE PAGE: IN OFFICIAL PALACE PHOTOGRAPHS, MARGARET WAS PORTRAYED AS INNOCENT AND SWEET, BUT SHE HAD A THIRST FOR DRAMA

career was glittering, and even wounds sustained in combat couldn't stop him – just weeks after losing a big toe to the surgeon's knife, he was back in action, flying Spitfires into battle.

At the end of World War II, Townsend retired from the Royal Air Force and joined the Windsor household as an equerry of King George VI. He became a valued and trusted member of the king's intimate circle and would later be appointed comptroller of the Queen Mother's household, a mark of his high status. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that the beautiful young princess and the handsome, experienced RAF officer fell madly in love. There could not be a happily ever after for the couple though, because Townsend wasn't just dashing, brave and celebrated – he was also married.

While Elizabeth married Prince Philip and settled into the role of wife, mother and queen-in-waiting, Margaret's own life was a whirlwind of social engagements, excitement and laughter. She had no shortage of admirers and even found time in her packed calendar to perform royal duties and support a range of charities. What really caught the eye of the press and public, however, was how much she liked to socialise, and she was always the belle of the ball.

The world dealt Princess Margaret a shattering blow in 1952 when, on a bleak February day, lung cancer claimed the life of the 56-year-old king. Margaret and her father had been devoted to one another, with the monarch always indulging his youngest child's wishes and, some argued, helping to nurture that spoiled, entitled little rich girl that some claimed she had become.

Now, with the death of her father, Margaret was left bereft. The woman who had been alive with happiness and joy sank deeper and deeper into depression and despair, utterly overwhelmed by her grief. Without her father's influence and support she was suddenly cut adrift. All that had seemed so set in her world had now been turned on its head.

With Elizabeth now queen, Margaret was also deprived of the good counsel of her sister and as the new monarch and her family moved into Buckingham Palace, Princess Margaret and her mother left for Clarence House. With them they took their new comptroller, a certain Group Captain Peter Townsend. Amid the emotional tumult, he was more than happy to lend Margaret a strong shoulder to cry on.

In fact, the change of employment was not the only turning point in Townsend's life. Like Margaret, he too was caught in a period of emotional turmoil thanks to his ongoing divorce. However, the story behind the breakdown of the Townsend's marriage hints at scandal beneath the official explanation.

In 1941, Townsend met Rosemary Pawle, and the pair were smitten. After just two weeks together the couple were married and over the next four years, two sons were born to the Townsends. Perhaps unsurprisingly given their fortnight of courtship, the marriage didn't work out in the long term, but the official reasons for the split remain tantalisingly vague. Called away from home first by his military duties and then by his services to the king, Townsend was increasingly absent from his family. Tired of being married to a man she rarely saw, Rosemary sought comfort elsewhere and began an affair with John de László, a dalliance that finally resulted in the couple's divorce in 1952.

Or so the papers believed. Rosemary and Townsend, however, remained tight-lipped even as the decades passed. No matter how much money the papers offered the former husband and wife to spill the beans, both understandably refused to offer any behind the scenes gossip about the breakdown of their marriage.

In fact, when George VI died in 1952, Princess Margaret had never felt so alone, so utterly despairing, and in her grief she sought some measure of comfort from those she trusted. Not for her were the platitudes of her socialite friends nor the society gents who filled her dance cards, it was to Peter Townsend that she turned. Though there is no reliable evidence that the couple became lovers in 1952, it doesn't take too much of a leap of faith to suppose that – even if they weren't sexually intimate – their relationship had certainly moved beyond chaperone and chaperoned. By the time Townsend filed for divorce that November, he and Margaret were certainly closer than they had ever been before, and the stage was set for scandal and heartbreak.

"THE PAIR WERE CLOSER THAN EVER BEFORE, AND THE STAGE WAS SET FOR SCANDAL AND HEARTBREAK"

In 1953, Queen Elizabeth II was still settling into her reign and preparing for a grand and glittering coronation. The last thing she needed was a domestic drama, yet when Peter Townsend asked Princess Margaret to marry him, drama was just what the new queen was about to get.

Of course, the excited young princess was thrilled to receive Townsend's proposal and hoped to accept him, but she could not do so without the approval of her sister. Although it might seem strange that she had to request her sibling's permission, the Georgians can be thanked for that particular loophole. The Royal Marriages Act, enshrined in law in 1772, set down the stringent rules under which members of the royal family could marry, its intention being to protect the integrity of the royal household. Central to its power was the clause that all members of the family must secure the official consent of the reigning monarch before they were permitted to marry their betrothed.

For those over 25 there was a very small get-out clause, however. In this case, so long as Parliament didn't refuse the marriage, then the wedding could take place after one year, whether or not the monarch had given consent.

So Margaret found her future decided by a rule that was almost 200 years old, and in Townsend

GROUP CAPTAIN PETER TOWNSEND

Meet the war hero who swept Margaret clean off her feet

Group Captain Peter Townsend was born in 1914 and before he turned 20, was soaring through the clouds with the Royal Air Force. It was the start of a career that would be lauded as high-flying in more ways than one.

Townsend's celebrated World War II record is a roll call of victories, near misses and heroic escapes, including one ditch in the ocean and even an amputated toe! When his injury kept him from flying he retained control of his squadron and was back in the air before a month had passed. Within six short months, Townsend had earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar in recognition of his efforts.

When the war ended, the celebrated Spitfire ace was welcomed into the royal household as a trusted equerry to the king. By the time Townsend met Princess Margaret in 1947, he had already been married for over five years and was the father of two children. His marriage ended in 1952, conspicuously just before his romance with Margaret and his proposal to her became public knowledge.

In the years following the end of their affair, Peter Townsend was posted to Brussels as air attaché at the British Embassy. It was here in Belgium that he fell in love with his secretary, Marie-Luce Jamagne, a woman who would later be noted for her striking resemblance to his royal former lover.

Townsend's 1959 marriage to Marie-Luce was a happy one. The couple had children and were together until his death more than 40 years later.

Later in life, Townsend became a writer specialising in military history, as well as penning a biography of George VI. In his own autobiography he shared precious few details of the tumultuous romance he had enjoyed with the princess, preferring to keep those particular secrets to himself. Group Captain Peter Townsend died of stomach cancer at his home in France in 1995. He was 80 years old.

she had found a far from perfect candidate. Not only was he much older than her, but he was also a divorcee. With the fate of Edward and the divorced Mrs Simpson fresh in her mind, Margaret must have guessed what the answer would be even before she sought permission. Even worse, the Church of England didn't recognise the marriages of those who were divorced as legitimate unions, rendering the couple's position even more precarious.

In fact, the queen didn't immediately refuse the request but instead asked her sister to wait a little longer before she made a decision. This would give everyone a chance to cool off, let Elizabeth adjust to her new role and also mean that Margaret was 25, the age at which she could marry without her sibling's permission. However, the news of the couple's relationship leaked out following the queen's coronation, an occasion at which Margaret and Townsend appeared to have eyes for nobody but each other. In a moment of unguarded domestic intimacy unthinkable for the brittle, headscarf-clad woman that Princess Margaret would become, she reached out to flick a piece of lint from Townsend's jacket. The tabloids loved it and so did the British people, who wanted to see the princess happy.

With public opinion rallying behind Margaret, the Queen moved Townsend out of Clarence House and back to Buckingham Palace, yet Parliament had even more dramatic schemes in mind. The government flatly refused to sanction the marriage unless Margaret agreed to renounce her royal rights and privileges and gave up her right to the throne. Should she agree to abandon her place in the line of succession, then Margaret would be free to marry her love in a civil ceremony. Should she wish to retain her rights of succession, even though she was highly unlikely ever to be queen, then there was no way that Margaret could marry Townsend.

A committed Christian, the choice was a stark one for Princess Margaret and she knew that her decision might have ramifications for the whole nation. She was separated from Townsend physically when the government had him posted to Brussels and, after long, agonising battles with her conscience, she made her decision.

A letter uncovered in 2009 from Princess Margaret to the prime minister, Anthony Eden, reveals that she had entertained other doubts about the marriage and was struggling with her decision. In the crucible of the public eye and press attention, the young woman was determined to make the right choice, and make it alone, regardless of what anyone else might tell her. When she did make her statement renouncing Townsend, however, it was one that he had written for her, carefully setting down the words

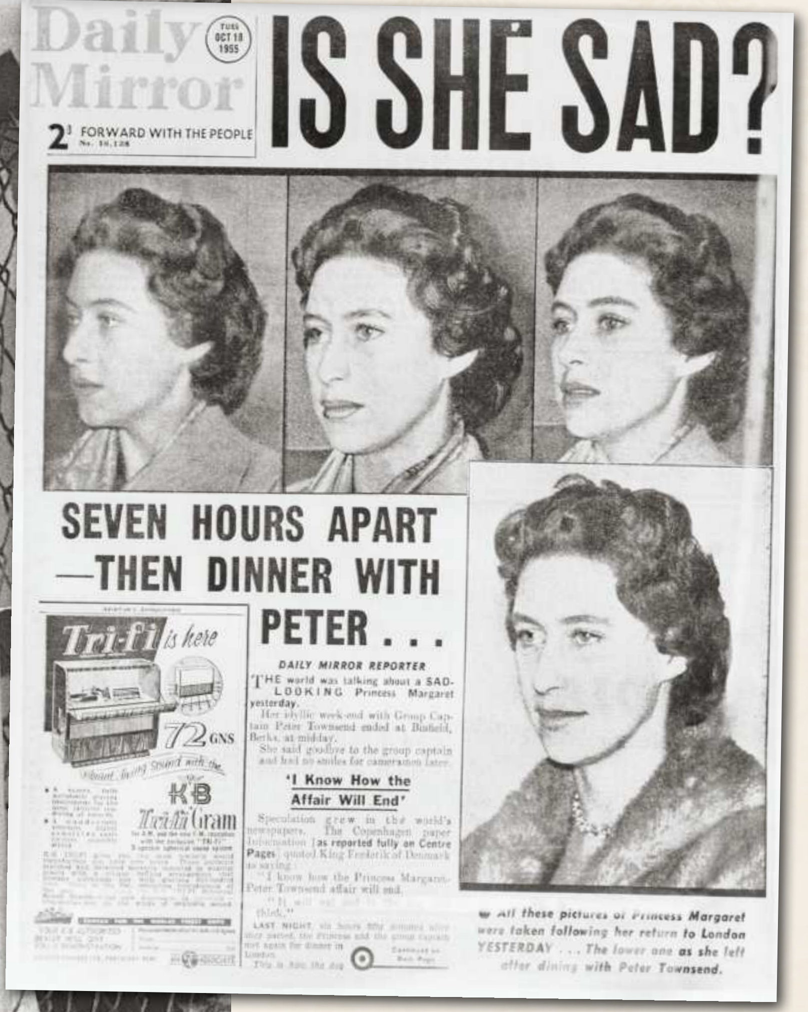
MARGARET AND PETER TOWNSEND PHOTOGRAPHED DURING THE ROYAL TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1947

“MARGARET MUST HAVE GUESSED WHAT THE ANSWER WOULD BE EVEN BEFORE SHE SOUGHT PERMISSION”

in a neat pencil script. Citing the Church’s stance on the marital status of divorcees, as well as her duty to her sister’s subjects, Margaret took to the airwaves to inform the nation that she could not marry Peter Townsend. “Mindful of the Church’s teachings that Christian marriage is indissoluble, and conscious of my duty to the Commonwealth,” she declared, the couple went their separate ways.

Yet were these noble words heartfelt, or merely intended to cover up a more cynical motive? It has since been speculated that Margaret’s decision was driven not by Christian faith, but by her own love of pomp and ceremony, and the fact that she simply would not give up her royal lifestyle and

BELOW: DATED 18 OCTOBER 1955, THE DAILY MIRROR PREOCCUPIED ITS FRONT PAGE WITH THE LOVE LIFE OF THE PRINCESS



Daily Mirror

TUES OCT 18 1955

2d FORWARD WITH THE PEOPLE

No. 16,128

IS SHE SAD?

SEVEN HOURS APART —THEN DINNER WITH PETER . . .

DAILY MIRROR REPORTER

THE world was talking about a SAD-LOOKING Princess Margaret yesterday.

Her idyllic week-end with Group Captain Peter Townsend ended at Binfield, Berks, at midday.

She said goodbye to the group captain and had no smiles for cameramen later.

‘I Know How the Affair Will End’

Speculation grew in the world’s newspapers. The Copenhagen paper Information (as reported fully on Centre Pages) quoted King Frederik of Denmark as saying:

“I know how the Princess Margaret-Peter Townsend affair will end.

“It will [illegible] think.”

LAST NIGHT, [illegible] after they parted, the Princess and the group captain met again for dinner in London.

This is how the day

Continued on Back Page

Tri-fi is here
72 GNS
Vibrant, living sound with the
KB Tri-fi Gram

All these pictures of Princess Margaret were taken following her return to London YESTERDAY . . . The lower one as she left after dining with Peter Townsend.

“WHERE HER UNCLE HAD FOLLOWED HIS HEART, MARGARET HAD FOLLOWED HER EGO”

privileges for love. Where her uncle had followed his heart, Margaret had, according to some, followed her ego.

As the years passed, Princess Margaret and Peter Townsend were never close again. Courted by eligible suitors from across the world, she never entertained another proposal until, in 1959, Townsend told Margaret that he was to remarry. Not long after, the princess accepted an offer of marriage from photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones, later Lord Snowdon. Once again Margaret had chosen a far from ideal candidate, but at least this time he was not a divorced father of two.

As a social and fashion icon, Margaret's life was never far from the headlines or from the whispered gossip of society salons. Her name was linked with lovers as diverse as Warren Beatty, David Niven and Robin Douglas-Home – who took his own life when their romance ended. As she and Snowdon lived increasingly separate lives, Margaret began an affair with Roddy Llewellyn that reached heights of emotion that drove the princess to attempt suicide. Around 17 years her junior, Llewellyn was a tabloid dream and just weeks after his romance with Margaret was splashed across the front page of the press, she and Snowdon publicly announced the end of their marriage. In 1978, the photographer and the princess were divorced.

PETER TOWNSEND PHOTOGRAPHED WITH HIS WIFE, MARIE-LUCE JAMAGNE, WHOSE RESEMBLANCE TO PRINCESS MARGARET WAS UNCANNY

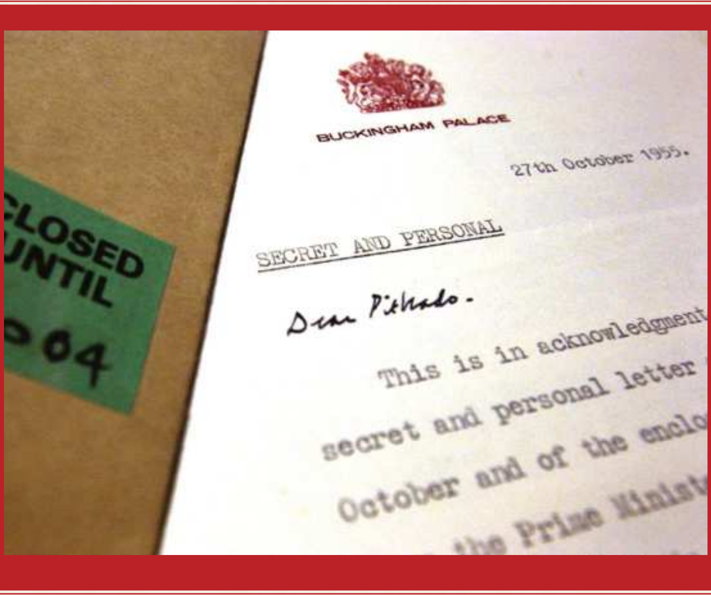
THE LETTER THAT WAS NEVER PUBLISHED

In anticipation of accepting Townsend's proposal, a letter was drafted and ready to go

On Friday 2 January 2004, the secrecy surrounding a series of classified documents finally expired. Among the files held at the National Archives Office in London was correspondence between Buckingham Palace and the Prime Minister's Office regarding Princess Margaret's very public love life.

Filed with the official letters was one very startling piece of sentimental history: a drafted letter written by Princess Margaret, which acknowledged her intention to marry Peter Townsend, and agreeing to relinquish her claim to the throne.

Ultimately, however, Princess Margaret decided to follow her head and not her heart, and instead issued an announcement on 31 October 1955 declaring that she would not go ahead with the marriage to Townsend. Her drafted letter of acceptance was never published, but its existence points to her turmoil over the decision.



LOSED
UNTIL
04

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

27th October 1955.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Dear Pitkalo.

This is in acknowledgment
secret and personal letter
October and of the enclo
the Prime Minist

PRINCESS MARGARET AS PHOTOGRAPHED ON HER WEDDING DAY

"QUITE BY CHANCE, THE FORMER LOVERS ENCOUNTERED ONE ANOTHER AT A KENSINGTON PALACE LUNCHEON"

Princess Margaret never remarried. Peter Townsend died in 1995 and she passed away in 2002. As the years sped by, she became a symbol of snobbish grandeur, the hedonistic sister who grew bitter in the shadow of her sibling, yet once she had been the focus of goodwill from a public who believed she deserved to be happy. Later, her unheard-of decision to divorce Snowdon catapulted the issue of royal marriage into the public eye. Her experience blazed a trail for those who would follow, ensuring that divorce became accepted in the royal household. No longer were members of the House of Windsor expected to suffer in silence and in the years that followed, several of her nieces and nephews followed her into the divorce courts.

Although Townsend and Margaret occasionally exchanged letters, they did not meet again for almost four decades. Quite by chance, the former lovers encountered one another at a Kensington Palace luncheon. Time had healed whatever wounds their separation had wrought and the two made a beeline for each other. Here, they spent the afternoon together, chatting like old friends and catching up on all that had happened to each other over the years.

Whether Princess Margaret's decision to reject the proposal of Peter Townsend and turn her back on love in favour of title was inspired by snobbish self-importance or religious and dutiful adherence to protocol, we will never truly know. Townsend, however, had his suspicions and wrote in his autobiography that Margaret had not been prepared to give up "her position, her prestige, her privy purse." His words are gently written, but scathing to interpret.

Famed for her love of partying, her scandalous liaisons and her altogether bohemian ways, whether Margaret would have been suited to life as the wife of a war hero is equally mysterious. She lived life to the full yet surely, sometimes, Princess Margaret Rose must have looked back on the road that she chose not to take and wonder wistfully 'what if'.

LEFT: MARGARET WITH HER HUSBAND, LORD SNOWDON, AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN IN JUNE 1964

© Alamy, Getty Images, TopFoto

WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER

THE MODEL OF MODERN ROYALTY

Run-of-the-mill student then Civil Service pen-pusher quietly charting his own course. Not, at first blush, the most promising of starts, but throw in a love affair or two, an all-consuming passion for aeroplanes, a tragically early death, and you end up with quite the story

Written by **Jon Wright**

In 1964, after another busy university year, Prince William of Gloucester made a private trip to Canada with his friend Tom Troubridge. One of the perks of being so well-placed in the line of succession was an invitation to stay at the residence of the Canadian Governor-General in Quebec. Things did not get off to the best of starts. The unassuming prince, dressed like any other easy-going student in his early 20s, turned up at the residence gates. There was little to indicate his lofty status and, as Troubridge remembered it, "we found our way barred by an implacable French Canadian sentry whom no amount of reasoning in our schoolboy French would convince that William was who he was". To make up for this embarrassment, William would be greeted by a "crashing 'Present Arms!'" every time he left the residence. This caused some puzzlement among visiting tourists who couldn't quite work out why such pomp was being lavished on "two scruffy youths in jeans and Breton berets". It was a sign of things to come: William would always be a little irked by the protocols and stiff formality of the royal cocoon and preferred to pursue his own path. He was ahead of his time, in that regard, and set a model that many future royals would follow, even if they often did so with a good deal less dignity and finesse.

William was born in December 1941, son of Henry, Duke of Gloucester and his doting wife, Alice. This made him the cousin of Elizabeth II (William had been page boy at her marriage) and the most traditional of royal educations was mapped out for him. Eton was followed by Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he seems to have worked reasonably hard, achieving a middling result in the second part of the historical tripos. Next, it was off to Stanford University in California: the first of William's unorthodox career choices but one that was fully supported by his parents.

William had no burning desire to take on the full gamut of royal duties, nor did he want to become one more figurehead or princely mascot in the armed forces, so he opted for a tour of duty in the Civil Service - another slightly maverick move. He started out, in 1965, working for the FCO at the British High Commission in Lagos. This provided him with front row seats for the opening scenes of the Nigerian Civil War. In 1968 it was off to the British Embassy in Tokyo, where he was appointed to a more senior position with special interests in trade relations. William performed competently - though one of his colleagues sniped that "commercial work was not his métier". He did make a good impression and, at least in public, talked optimistically of improving the rather tetchy relationship between the two nations. In private, recently returned to England, he spoke more bluntly and, true to form, also found time to grumble about the hidebound officials at the Japanese court. The emperor, he confessed, was particularly aloof but, William joked, "when one has been demoted from being a god there is nothing much left".

The Japanese years had additional, rather puzzling consequences. William met the former model and stewardess, Zsuzsi Starkloff. You can sometimes get the impression that Zsuzsi was always eager to inflate the significance of her relationship (which was real enough) with William. In a 2012 newspaper interview, Zsuzsi talked of a dastardly establishment plot to keep

RIGHT: PRINCE WILLIAM WAS DETERMINED TO LIVE HIS LIFE IN THE WAY HE WANTED

the star-crossed lovers apart. She was adamant that William, right up to the end, was desperate to marry her but that courtiers and the royal family were having none of it. She pointed to three major factors. She was a divorced commoner with children (certainly a mark against her), she was a foreigner (not, in and of itself, an obstacle), and she was Jewish.

But the royal family would have needed to take Starkloff very seriously to have mounted a vigorous campaign against her. When Princess Margaret visited Japan in 1969 – guest of honour at the 'British Week in Tokyo' trade-fest – she met Zsuzsi and was charm personified but advised William that "I do think you would be wise to wait for a bit, and then come home and see how everything looks". This, it is safe to assume, was counsel that originated with the Queen and essentially meant that the royal family would simply wait for William to grow out of his brief infatuation. At the embassy, William's superiors were asked to keep an eye on events and their attitude seems to have been that it did no harm for the prince to enjoy the occasional dalliance while abroad, since he would know better than to bring any whiff of scandal home with him.

What, though, was William's position when he did return to England in 1970? He invited Zsuzsi for a short visit to the family home at Barnwell Manor, and his mother behaved very

LEFT: WILLIAM AND HIS GIRLFRIEND NICOLE SIEFF ATTEND ONE OF THE PRINCE'S BELOVED AIR RACES

THOSE MISHAP-PRONE ROYALS IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES

The death of William of Gloucester is eerily reminiscent of an earlier royal aviation tragedy. Happily, royal encounters with flying have usually been limited to a blend of apprehension and gung-ho enthusiasm

Setting aside earlier ballooning jaunts, the future Edward VIII was the first royal to take to the skies, enjoying a 30-minute spin in a biplane over Northern France in 1917. He didn't see what all the fuss was about: "Flying is extraordinarily safe nowadays," he wrote to his father. Between 1929 and 1935, the prince bought 13 planes for his private use. His brother, George VI, was less keen but wartime obliged him to take numerous flights – a trip to North Africa was particularly risky. The dangers were often on royal minds. During the tour of South Africa in 1947, the family was split up for the bumpy flight to a game reserve: King George and Princess Margaret travelling in one Vickers Viking with Queen Elizabeth and Princess Elizabeth in another. Margaret took a carefree approach: "Paying no attention to what the rest of my family said about flying," she wrote home, "I enjoyed every minute of it".

Prince Philip emerged as an able pilot with a habit of bending rules and indulging in stunts. At one point Churchill summoned Philip's private secretary for a telling off: "Is it your intention to wipe out the royal family in the shortest possible time?". Not that the most punctilious royal pilot was immune from gaffes. In June 1994, Prince Charles overshot a runway on Islay. The only casualty was the undercarriage of the plane's nose but this was an aircraft belonging to the Queen's Flight and pilot error was blamed, so a bruised ego can be added to the injury list.

GEORGE VI AND THE PRINCESSES ELIZABETH AND MARGARET TOUCH DOWN AFTER A BUMPY SOUTH AFRICAN FLIGHT IN NOVEMBER 1947

pleasantly with a dash of royal hauteur added to the mix. William and Zsuzsi also shared a holiday in America and this does seem to have set off alarm bells. William received a cable from the Queen, ordering him to represent her at the independence celebrations in Tonga: not much chance of bumping into Zsuzsi in the middle of the South Pacific. Here, at least, was an incident that perhaps strengthens Zsuzsi's case. The royal family's patience with William was wearing thin. His father, who had suffered two serious strokes in 1968, was now very ill and it was time for William to pull his weight.

William had probably already reached the same conclusion. This doesn't mean that he didn't care deeply for Zsuzsi, and she was certainly well-liked by many of his friends: according to Giles St Aubyn, "she was witty, intelligent, attractive. William sparkled in her company." But the prince knew where to draw a line. For all his independence of spirit, he did not want to offend the royal family or be accused of dereliction of his royal duty. Zsuzsi would talk, with an ounce or two of wishful thinking, of the great love affair that was crushed in its infancy: she would wear a ring given to her by the prince every day. But William was willing to move on. The couple never met in person after 1970 and William had soon begun a relationship with Nicole Sieff – another divorcée with children – who was allowed to attend and lay a wreath at William's funeral in the autumn of 1972. This brings us to the tragic end of the young prince of Gloucester.

William can sometimes come over as being a little too good to be true. It is almost a relief to learn that he was able to summon up, albeit rarely, the royal talent for petulance. Alongside the effortless charm and generosity he also had an appealing taste for adventure. Skiing and trekking were his hobbies of choice and, in the summer of 1963, he had even managed to convince the BBC (or perhaps it was the other way round) to commission a film in which he led a 1,200-mile safari across southern Africa.

“ALONGSIDE THE CHARM AND GENEROSITY HE ALSO HAD AN APPEALING TASTE FOR ADVENTURE”

In the adrenaline stakes, however, nothing ever came close to William's enduring passion for flying. Minor run-ins with bad health were never a deterrent. Ahead of his posting to Tokyo he underwent a standard medical examination and he was diagnosed with porphyria – the disease that supposedly wreaked havoc with royals as eminent as Mary, Queen of Scots and George III. The diagnosis of variegate porphyria was confirmed in 1970 but it was now in remission so there was no reason for William to keep his feet on terra firma. He had received a solid training from the early 1960s onwards, proving himself capable of handling increasingly challenging aircraft. By 1968 he was able to fly himself to Tokyo for his new diplomatic posting. His ardour only deepened following his return to England and he became a regular sight at airshows and competitions up and down the land.

On 19 August 1972, he had put in a creditable performance at the European gliding competition at Dunstable Downs, Bedfordshire, but everything turned sour a few days later. A handful of photos have survived of William polishing his cherished Piper Cherokee Arrow just a few minutes before taking to the skies for the Goodyear International Air Trophy on 28 August. The weather at Halfpenny Green, near Wolverhampton, was tolerable and Vyrell Mitchell, who had often flown with William, was serving as co-pilot. Then the unthinkable happened. Shortly after take-off, and still at low altitude, the plane's wing had an unfortunate encounter with a tree and the Piper Cherokee span out of control, flipped over, and crashed into a bank. It burst into flames leaving only the charred remains of Gloucester and Mitchell. The shock was incalculable for William's mother. A mourner at the funeral, held at St Andrews Church, Barnwell, recalled thinking how the sight of her "wrings my heart – utterly ravaged yet very upright and royal". Britain had a great deal to mourn, too. William would have been interesting to watch had he lived, and might just have achieved something spectacular. The royals have always been a mixed bunch. William, though not entirely free from moral stain, was certainly one of the good ones.

TOP LEFT: THE SCENE OF THE CRASH WHERE THE PRINCE'S PIPER CHEROKEE ARROW CAME DOWN, KILLING BOTH HIMSELF AND HIS CO-PILOT

TOP RIGHT: AFTER HIS DEATH, ZSUZSI STARKLOFF CLAIMED THAT THE PAIR HAD BEEN FORCED TO PART WAYS

© Alamy, Getty Images, Shutterstock

PRINCE CHARLES

THE WARS OF THE WALESES

It only takes fifteen minutes to walk from St Paul's Cathedral to the High Court of Justice. For Charles and Diana, the notional journey from the glamorous setting of their wedding to the courtroom that finalised their divorce was a little more circuitous. How did a marriage that began with such high hopes descend into a shambles of anger and recriminations?

Written by Jon Wright

Prince Charles thoroughly enjoyed the bachelor life during the 1970s. His mentor, Lord Mountbatten, was delighted, as he crassly put it, to see the prince "popping in and out of bed with girls." But both men realised that, sooner or later, Charles would have to fulfil his sacred duty: to marry and produce an heir. The public knew this, too, so whenever the prince was seen out and about with a well-born woman, the newspapers asked the inevitable question: is this the one?

Eventually, Charles convinced himself that Lady Diana Spencer might just measure up. An assistant at a kindergarten might seem like an odd choice, but Diana also happened to come from one of the country's most venerable aristocratic dynasties. The courtship went swimmingly, especially during a holiday at Balmoral in November 1980, when Diana deeply impressed the royal family. Some of Charles's friends, including Nicholas Soames, harboured doubts. Diana's age was the chief sticking point: she was 12 years younger than Charles, making her 19 at the time of the engagement in 1981. What on earth would the couple have in common? Others were concerned that while Diana appeared to be smitten, Charles kept blurting out phrases like "I'm sure I could fall in love with her" to his pals. Despite all that, it was the moment for Charles to take the plunge and in the end, as Mark Charteris, the retired courtier, later put it, "few men can resist a pretty girl who openly adores them."

24 February 1981 was the day of the big announcement and, again, an awkward moment arose when the couple were asked if they were in love. Diana immediately replied with a bubbly "of course," but Charles added an enigmatic "whatever 'in love' means," to his answer. St Paul's Cathedral was chosen as the venue for the sumptuous wedding on 29 July and, while some were surprised by Diana's omission of the traditional promise to "obey," the day was marked down as a great success. The couple's residences at St James's Palace and Highgrove stood ready and waiting, so there was now the matter of a honeymoon. After a spell at the Broadlands estate in Hampshire, the newlyweds headed for a sun-drenched cruise in the Mediterranean. It took no time at all for the cracks to show. On board Britannia, Diana enjoyed giggling with the yacht's crew; Charles preferred

LEFT: PRINCE CHARLES HAD PREVIOUSLY HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH CAMILLA, BUT EVEN AFTER SHE MARRIED SOMEBODY ELSE, CHARLES HARBOURED STRONG FEELINGS FOR HER

> "THE NEWLYWEDS HEADED FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN. IT TOOK NO TIME AT ALL FOR THE CRACKS TO SHOW"

to brood in his cabin, reading and painting. A worrying pattern was set.

Two competing narratives emerged very quickly. On the one hand there was the image of Charles being flabbergasted by Diana's mood swings, with the prince trying, but failing, to provide comfort and consolation. He soon became irritated by Diana's lack of intellectual curiosity, her tantrums, and her adolescent humour. Her supposed passion for the country lifestyle had, Charles decided, all been a sham intended to curry favour. On the other hand, there is the version articulated by the princess. She was the newcomer, who nobody really liked, and who was constantly pressured into behaving in ways that clashed with her temperament. Charles was unsympathetic and Diana felt hopelessly trapped.

The children made a difference. At first, Diana was overwhelmed by the responsibility of carrying a future king and, in January 1982, threw herself down a staircase at Sandringham as a cry for attention. William's birth in June did, however, give the couple something very precious in common, and moments of happiness, ordinary domesticity managed, albeit fitfully, to ease tensions. But this, and Harry's birth in September 1984, could only achieve so much. Differences had now become entrenched. Diana was increasingly aggravated by the earnest dinner-table chat and endless polo matches, while Charles was alarmed by Diana's independent cast of mind. Behind the timid facade was a woman who brushed off pushy advice regarding child-rearing, the schools she would send her children to, and the nannies she would employ. Many admired this aspect of Diana's character: she was, in Tina Brown's memorable phrase, the "iron mouse." Charles was not of their number and he was also resentful of Diana's talent for wowing a crowd, of being so approachable, and of winning any popularity contest between them.

The battle to salvage the marriage had perhaps been lost as early as 1985. Diana specifically cited Harry's birth as a watershed moment, when any remaining physical passion simply evaporated. Charles turned to old friends who had been pushed to the sidelines; Diana revelled in her growing self-assurance and the support of her own circle of confidantes. Charles found solace in his passions – whether architecture, homeopathy or organic agriculture; Diana's mind increasingly turned to charitable causes of her own. Likewise, the temptation to pursue, or rekindle, separate romantic relationships was, and may already have become, irresistible.

Diana knew all about Charles's and Camilla Parker Bowles's past and this was a wellspring of suspicion from the outset of the marriage. The couple had met and enjoyed a brief physical relationship in the early 1970s and, while the demands of Charles's naval career intervened, the pair parted amicably. In fact, they didn't really part at all and Camilla remained a close friend and companion.

The question of when Charles began a new physical affair with Camilla is a much-debated issue. He insisted that this did not happen before his marriage to Diana had entered the "irreconcilable" stage in 1986. Others gave the

TOP: OLIVER HOARE ENJOYED A LONG AFFAIR WITH DIANA DURING THE LATE 1980s AND EARLY 1990s. HERE THEY ARE, A LITTLE EARLIER, WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE SPOUSES AT ASCOT IN JUNE 1986

ABOVE: KANGA TRYON WAS JUST THE SORT OF PERSON DIANA COULD NOT ABIDE – A FEMALE FRIEND WHO HAD SUSTAINED A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH CHARLES FOR DECADES. THEY ARE PICTURED HERE IN 1993 impression that they were aware of the couple's reunion a good deal earlier: perhaps as far back as 1979. In any event, the love affair was back in full swing by 1986. The Parker Bowleses had moved closer to Highgrove and Camilla would call round for dinner on non-Diana weekends, while Charles would dispatch endless flowers to Camilla from the Highgrove gardens. On other occasions, the pair would meet up at the houses of friends dotted around the English countryside. A much-miffed Diana took great pleasure in her role as unexpected guest at a birthday celebration for Camilla's sister in 1989. She took her husband's mistress aside and launched into a withering attack, along the lines of "I know what you're up to," "Don't you dare play the hostess in my marital home." As we'll see, Camilla would emerge as the villain par excellence during Diana's soul-bearing period in the early 1990s.

Not that Diana was slow to seek out romantic attachments of her own. Speculation brought unwelcome attention to unlikely figures. Diana was very fond of her protection officer Barry Mannakee, and made no secret of their bond, but Mannakee was never caught doing anything more compromising than giving the princess a comforting hug. This, however, was sufficient grounds for dismissing Mannakee from his post. James Hewitt, by contrast, certainly had an affair with Diana between 1986 and 1991, or thereabouts. He would later gain a reputation as a caddish ne'er-do-well, largely thanks to his own utterances, but at the time he was keenly aware of the need for discretion. He would visit Highgrove when Charles was away but made exits and entrances that did not draw attention, and the couple spent much time at Hewitt's remote family home in Devon. He clearly made Diana very happy for long spells and got on well with the boys.

DIANA KNEW THAT CHARLES AND CAMILLA WERE CARRYING ON BEHIND HER BACK

Other names came and went. The merchant banker Philip Dunne was often seen in cosy settings with Diana during the later 1980s and David Waterhouse, coming from aristocratic stock, was perceived - even by Charles and the royal family - as a safe pair of hands compared to more unpredictable suitors. It has been suggested that such figures were deployed to put people off Hewitt's scent but this seems like a stretch. More probably went on with Dunne than the oft-reported footsy-playing under restaurant tables,

> "CAMILLA WOULD EMERGE AS THE VILLAIN PAR EXCELLENCE DURING DIANA'S SOUL-BEARING PERIOD"

WHO WANTS TO BE A PRINCESS?

Lord Mountbatten offered another nugget of chauvinistic wisdom to Prince Charles: he should have as many affairs as possible and then settle down with a "suitable, attractive, sweet-hearted girl" before someone else snapped her up. When Charles's thoughts turned to marriage, who were the leading candidates?

Jane Wellesley
Jane, the daughter of the Eighth Duke of Wellington, enjoyed a close relationship with Charles from 1973 or thereabouts. She was highly intelligent and even Camilla thought she would be a good match. Unfortunately, Jane had too many insights into the strains and stresses of royal life. "I don't need another title," she once announced.

Lady Sarah Spencer
Another Spencer, Lady Sarah joined the fray ahead of her younger sister Diana. She and Charles got along well and the Queen Mother was thought to be particularly keen on her. In the end, though, things between her and Charles didn't work out and her crucial role would be bringing her sister to the prince's attention: she once referred to herself as "cupid."

Sabrina Guinness
Once dubbed "the It Girl of her generation" and with many a celebrity boyfriend in her past, Sabrina was very fond of Charles, but it seems unlikely that, in the end, she would have been regarded as a suitable match for the prince. In addition, it was hard to erase the sin of once sitting, accidentally, in the Queen's chair at dinner.

Anna Wallace
Daughter of Scottish landowner Hamish Wallace, Anna adored outdoors life and was very much in the marital mix. She also spoke her mind. When Charles neglected her at the Queen Mother's 80th birthday she informed the prince that she was "never treated so badly." A little later, having endured the sight of Charles dancing all night with Camilla at a polo function, she stormed off. She was not to be 'the one.'

Davina Sheffield
The granddaughter of celebrated industrialist Lord McGowan and cousin of former Prime Minister David Cameron's wife Samantha, Davina seemed to be leading the pack at one point. Then an ex-boyfriend scuppered everything with his kiss-and-tell revelations about his and Davina's sex life, bringing an abrupt end to her and Charles's relationship.

Amanda Knatchbull
Amanda was the granddaughter of Charles's godfather Lord Mountbatten and Dickie pushed her candidacy from 1974 onwards. Her relationship with Charles had real emotional depth, but when the prince proposed to her following the assassination of Lord Mountbatten by the IRA in 1979, Amanda felt unable to take the plunge.

and Waterhouse made fairly conspicuous gaffes: saying that he had invited Diana round to play bridge, which requires a quorum of four players, though there were just the two of them in his flat.

It had all become rather bizarre by the end of the decade, with the rugby player Will Carling's wife regularly appearing on TV to tell Diana to stay away from her man. Diana, meanwhile, was constantly adding to her list of women with whom Charles had supposedly slept. A sense of major crisis was looming and the fates decreed that 1992 would be the cataclysmic year.

Long before 1992 Charles's and Diana's friends had mastered the art of dropping the odd comment to a sympathetic journalist in hopes of embarrassing 'the enemy.' If they could help oil the wheels when it came to placing a biased piece in the glossies, where was the harm? Even Camilla was not above chatting to her journalist friend (and future editor of *The Sun*) Stuart Higgins to spread the latest gossip about Diana. But nothing had quite prepared Britain for Andrew Morton and his *Diana: Her True Story*, published in June 1992. The book was no literary triumph, but as an exercise in propaganda it was a masterpiece.

"NOTHING HAD QUITE PREPARED BRITAIN FOR ANDREW MORTON AND HIS DIANA: HER TRUE STORY"

People were aware that Morton was planning a biography and some of Diana's friends - notably Dr James Colthurst - saw a golden opportunity. We did not learn of the extent of Diana's direct contribution (massive, as it turned out) until after her death. The official line at the time was that Diana had not prevented her friends from talking to Morton. The process usually involved Morton contacting a friend, the friend sounding out Diana, and Diana suggesting that they should do whatever they thought best - which was easily understood as an invitation to spill every bean they possessed. Some, like James Gilbey (more on him in a moment) and Carolyn Bartholomew took to the task with gusto. James Hewitt flatly refused to have anything to do with the project.

Morton's tome flew off the shelves and the publisher struggled to keep up with demand. It was a warts-and-all story, but the reader was encouraged to believe that the royal family owned all the warts. Charles's affair with Camilla gobbled up a lot of space, as did the image of Diana as a picked-upon woman who had found herself in terrible emotional straits. The bulimia, the self-harm and possible suicide attempts featured heavily. Efforts were made by Charles's camp to mount a counter-offensive: Penny Junor seemed to spend most of her days defending Charles in print and on air. But these manoeuvres did little to contain the upswing in Diana's popularity, though this was often combined with concerns that Diana's mental instability was more serious than anyone had realised.

On its own, Morton's book might have been enough to bring an end to the marriage, but it was ably assisted by two rather mysterious cases of phone-hacking. The press got its hands on the tapes of a phone call (made way back on New

FITTING IN WITH THE FIRM

Diana complained endlessly about the way she was perceived by the royal family, but did the Queen and the gang always treat the princess with disdain?

In the early days, the Queen went out of her way to explain the crazy world of courtly protocol. This, perhaps, was entirely well-intentioned, not a campaign of intimidation and interference. As the years passed, tensions did develop. The royal family was well used to coping with sexual shenanigans within its ranks, so long as everything remained hush-hush, but Diana's devotion to her own causes, at the expense of more conventional royal duties, truly irked the monarch. Personal spats with other royals also cropped up. Princess Anne was furious when Diana did not ask her to serve as Harry's godmother and, by the dark years of the early 1990s, Anne was happy to take a potshot: "Before you joined there were hardly any leaks… now the ship is so full of holes it's no wonder that it's sinking." Prince Philip also joined the chorus of disapproval, writing a bizarre series of letters to Diana that oscillated between apologising for his son's behaviour and harsh adjudications of Diana's actions. In person, Philip once warned Diana that if she divorced Charles she would lose her Royal Highness title. Diana was only too pleased to trade on the ancient pedigree of the Spencers: "My title is a lot older than yours, Philip." The Queen Mother was probably hardest hit by Diana's public airing of problems. When Diana arrived at a state dinner in 1993 the Queen Mother was appalled. "What is she doing here?" she asked her daughter. The answer was simple: the Queen had invited her. Diana was still married to the Prince of Wales and was still the mother of a future king.

ABOVE: GIVEN THE DATE, JUNE 1992, DIANA AND THE QUEEN MOTHER DO A REMARKABLE JOB OF PUTTING ON A SHOW OF FAMILIAL UNITY FOR THE CAMERAS AT ROYAL ASCOT

LEFT: ANOTHER NIGHT ON THE TOWN: CHARLES'S FRIENDSHIP WITH CAMILLA REMAINED VERY IMPORTANT TO HIM DURING THE 1970s AND BEYOND. HERE, THEY ARE OFF FOR A SPOT OF OPERA IN 1975

ABOVE: OOPS! CHARLES FAILS IN HIS ATTEMPT TO PLANT A KISS ON HIS WIFE DURING THE 1992 TOUR OF INDIA

Year's Eve, 1989) in which the princess launched into a rant with her friend James Gilbey. In the so-called 'Squidgygate' conversation Diana complained, inter alia, that Charles "makes my life torture" and that the Queen Mother had a vexing way of looking at her with a mixture of condescension and pity.

The initial explanation of the recording's origin involved a radio ham in Oxfordshire, Cyril Reenan, picking up the conversation on his scanner. He eventually decided to contact *The Sun* which, after a long delay, brought the transcripts to the public's attention in August 1992. Some puzzling questions remained. Was it really possible that Reenan simply happened upon the call – conducted via two mobile phones, miles apart? Close analysis of the tape revealed discrepancies and the conspiracy theorists had a field day with their use of words like bugging, tampering, plots and MI5.

A flustered Diana did not have to wait long for the tables to turn. Enter the so-called 'Camillagate' scandal of November 1992. Back in 1989 Camilla and Charles had shared an astonishingly intimate phone call: the highlight involved Charles fantasising about being a tampon and, well, let's leave that there. The source of the tape was, again, something of a mystery but the consequences were much easier to diagnose. Charles was mortified and the royal family was astonished.

Throughout the year, one person had continued to believe that reconciliation was still a possibility. The Queen packed Charles and Diana off to India in February with disastrous results. Diana displayed an almost physical revulsion whenever Charles came too close. When she was obliged to present her husband with a trophy at a polo event and receive a tiny kiss, as etiquette demanded, she turned away her face and Charles was placed in the awkward position of puckering up to a random point somewhere between Diana's cheek and thin air. The Queen's other masterplan, the so-called 'togetherness tour' of South Korea in November, also bore rotten fruit: the couple could barely stomach being in one another's presence.

No, the game was up. Charles met with Diana on the day following the Queen's famous annus horribilis speech and announced that he would be seeking a formal separation. The prime minister, John Major, broke the news to the House of Commons on 9 December. He made a few blow-softening comments about how the pair might find a way to heal their wounds, but any betting person would have wagered on the only likely outcome: divorce.

In many ways, the years of the divorce wars were business as usual. Diana kept hoping that someone would come to whisk her away from all the strife. She placed high hopes in the married antiquities dealer Oliver Hoare with whom she had a relationship dating back to 1989. She overstepped the mark, however, by plaguing the Hoare household with hundreds of phone calls, some made from inside Kensington Palace, others from a nearby phone-box. The trouble was that Hoare never had any intention of leaving his wife. Diana also intensified her campaign to prove that Charles was an incorrigible womaniser. She reserved much of her ire for her sons' nanny, Tiggy Legge-Bourke.

The tribal nature of the media war between the Waleses did, however, intensify after 1992. "You were either in one camp or you were in the other," wrote Lord Palumbo. "You couldn't really be in both… the warfare is total in such circumstances…

THE VIEW FROM ABROAD

What did the foreign press make of the marriage? In America, for example, they never really fell out of love with Diana, but US newspapers still allowed local stereotypes and assumptions to creep into their reportage

Diana tended to fare very well in the foreign press. In France most attention was paid to her good looks and fashion sense but the Republic could rally when needed. Diana was delighted with the post-separation edition of *Paris Match* that encouraged the princess to "Have Courage!" America was usually kind, too. *Life* magazine rarely had a bad word to say about the princess. She was portrayed as the perfect tonic for a stale monarchy. Americans loved all the pomp and pageantry, but they also liked someone who was willing to stir things up a little. Some American commentators offered more nuanced accounts of Diana. Tina Brown pushed the image of a woman who, far from being a timid victim, was independent-minded and more than capable of manipulation: but this portrayal stemmed, at heart, from admiration. Another familiar American trope was tailor-made for Diana. *The New York Times* wrote of her "being plunged into a role for which she had never been prepared and from which there appeared to be no escape." Diana was construed as a latter-day Marilyn Monroe or Judy Garland. Best of all are the moments when the true intention of an article is hard to pin down. A piece in *New York Magazine*, published at the time of the wedding, reflected on the legacies of past relationships. All the participants, from Camilla down, were now the best of friends. True, "Charles might have to shift gears slightly, but only slightly. All of these people are so civilised." Was this an expression of genuine admiration, or a dig at the British toffs' addiction to hypocrisy and turning potential scandal into a chummy day-out at the races?

ABOVE: FROM HER ENGAGEMENT TO HER DEATH, DIANA WAS PLASTERED ACROSS MAGAZINES AROUND THE WORLD

very nasty, and very deep, and very bitter." The mission, both for Charles and Diana, was to control the story and if, as a writer, you were deemed to have done the right thing you were heartily congratulated. This could happen to journalists who had simply published something positive without any overt agenda. In February 1993, the well-respected Anthony Holden wrote a pro-Diana cover story for *Vanity Fair*. No one had asked him to do so but he still received the mysterious phone call: "Be at San Lorenzo by 12.40", the voice said. Holden kept the date and after 20 minutes Diana breezed in, with kids in tow. She sat down and thanked Holden for his kind words. The writer had a strong sense that he was being manipulated, but he was aware of the fact, so he saw no problem.

> "A PHOTO OF DIANA IN TEARS WAS HIGHLY PRIZED BY THE PAPARAZZI"

Charles and Diana needed the press, and the press needed them. A second-rate Diana story could boost *The Sun*'s circulation by 60,000: if *Hello!* magazine had Diana on the cover, the issue's readership would see a ten per cent boost in sales. The editor of *The Telegraph*, Max Hastings, was saddened to see much grander journalistic institutions entering into silly bidding wars and pursuing inane stories: "You felt, 'what's the point?'... If it's a commercial game now, then everyone's out for themselves." Things could, of course, turn nasty. A photo of Diana in tears was highly prized and the paparazzi shouted the foulest words at the princess in order to provoke one.

In important ways, then, these were tough years that saw a return to the kooky therapies and the random ditching of friends, but Diana

DIANA DURING HER FAMOUS 1995 INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN BASHIR

relished being entirely independent. As for Charles, he appears to have found the whole to-and-fro distasteful but, interestingly, he was the first to take to the television screens to promote a more positive image of himself.

To the prince, Jonathan Dimbleby seemed like the obvious choice as interlocutor: he was regarded as a good friend. A whole project was mapped out – an interview, TV profiles, all while Dimbleby worked on an authorised biography. Eyebrows were immediately raised: the access granted to Dimbleby would be unprecedented and the fact that he was a conscientious journalist meant that he would inevitably explore skeletons in the closet. When news of the Dimbleby idea reached Dickie Arbiter, the old palace hand was blunt: "I think it sucks." Max Hastings described the project as "absolute madness."

They were both correct, and during the June 1994 TV interview Dimbleby quickly moved away from the agreed upon topic of conversation – the prince's charitable works – so that he could quiz him over his personal life. Had he committed adultery, how long had he been engaged in an affair with Camilla, and all the rest. Charles stumbled over his words and emerged with his reputation greatly diminished. Diana waited until 20 November 1995 for her moment in the spotlight. She spoke to Martin Bashir on the BBC's *Panorama* programme and did a much better job of explaining her side of the story. There was the usual talk of bulimia, self-harm and depression but Diana had some excellent one-liners up her sleeve. When talk turned to Camilla, Diana was primed with the brilliant "well there were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded."

Even the most optimistic royal-watcher knew what was coming next. Diana was not obsessed with securing a divorce (she worried about custody terms), while Charles and the royal family always had an eye on possible constitutional ramifications. But enough was enough. In December 1995 it was announced that the Queen, with the full support of the prime minister, had sent letters to the Prince and Princess of Wales advising them to seek a divorce. This was finalised on 28 August 1996. Suddenly, everything had become very business-like.

How long ago and far away the summer of 1980 must have seemed. Back then, after a polo match at Cowdray Park, Charles and Diana had sat together on a bail of hay. Diana told Charles how moved she'd been by his sadness in the wake of Lord Mountbatten's death. More than ever, she said, Charles should be with a woman who would look after him. Perhaps this was just Diana on top manipulative form, telling Charles what he wanted to hear, or perhaps there was a little bit of love in the Sussex evening air – whatever love means.

TOP: PUT THE ROYAL FAMILY ON A BALCONY AND THEY ARE ALL SMILES. BACK INSIDE THINGS CAN BE RATHER DIFFERENT. AT LEAST WILLIAM AND HARRY SEEM TO BE GENUINELY ENJOYING THIS FLYPAST IN 1989

ABOVE LEFT: JAMES HEWITT, THE MAN WHO MANAGED TO MAKE DIANA HAPPY, CUTTING QUITE A FIGURE ON THE POLO FIELD

ABOVE RIGHT: DIANA LOATHED THE IDEA OF TIGGY LEGGE-BOURKE BEING SO INVOLVED IN THE LIVES OF WILLIAM AND HARRY

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A BAD CONNECTION

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How did a grandson of Queen Victoria and an Eton-educated duke become an ardent supporter of the world's most reviled regime?

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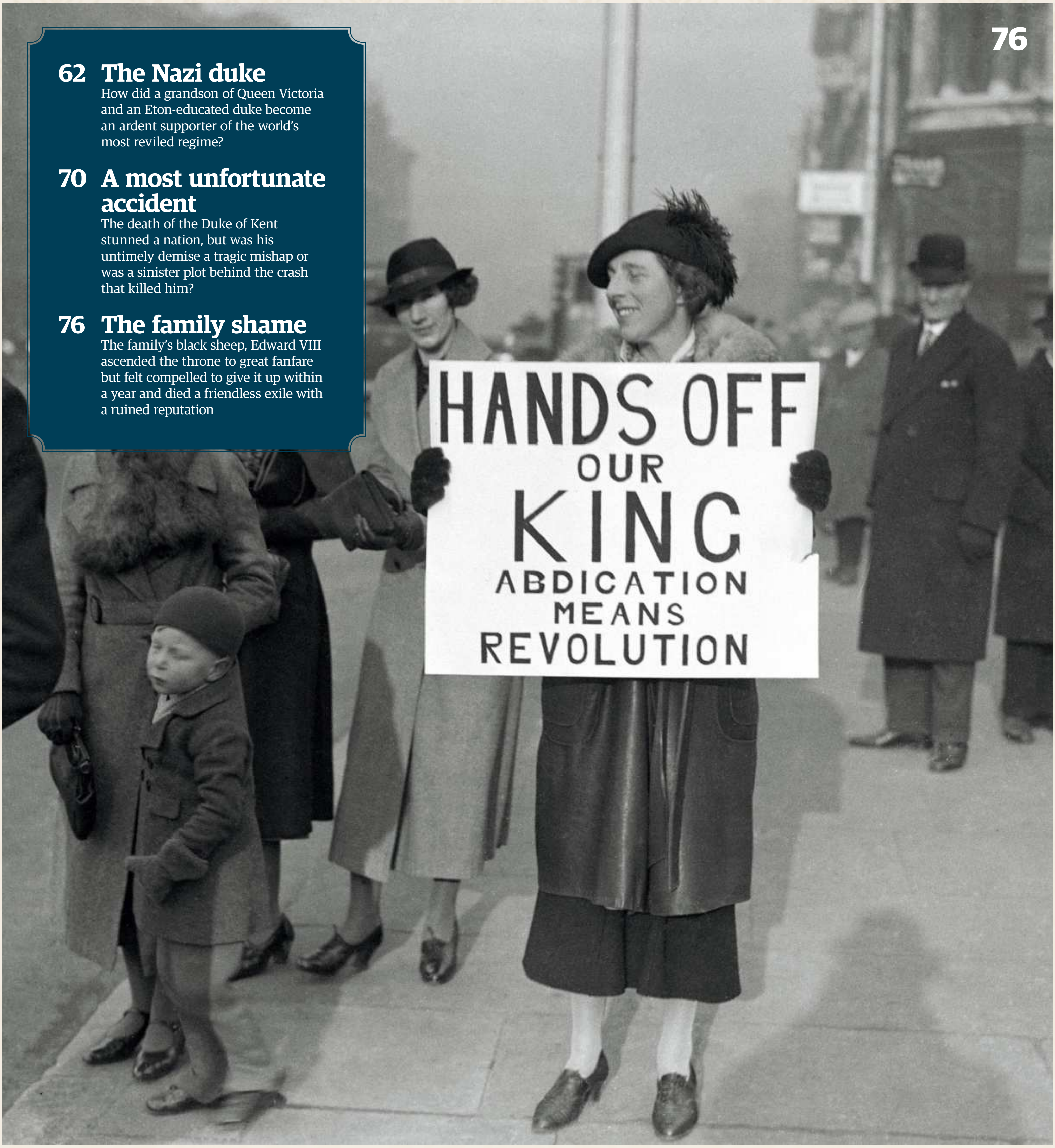
The death of the Duke of Kent stunned a nation, but was his untimely demise a tragic mishap or was a sinister plot behind the crash that killed him?

76 The family shame
The family's black sheep, Edward VIII ascended the throne to great fanfare but felt compelled to give it up within a year and died a friendless exile with a ruined reputation



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CHARLES EDWARD, DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG & GOTHA

THE NAZI DUKE

How did a grandson of Queen Victoria and an Eton-educated British duke become an ardent supporter of the world's most reviled regime?

Written by **Harry Cunningham**

When we think of the links between the Nazi Party and the British royal family, the name that inevitably comes to mind is the former King Edward VIII. Although nothing has ever been satisfactorily proved about the former king's links to the Führer, public interest in him has overshadowed the role of a royal, long since forgotten, who really did do the unthinkable and actively campaigned for Hitler, without shame. Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha's support for both Kaiser Wilhelm II and Adolf Hitler, arguably the most infamous dictator in history, would cast an unwelcome light on both the royal family's heritage and the role of the upper classes in appeasing Hitler's appalling crimes.

Prince Leopold Charles Edward George Albert – better known by his middle names Charles Edward – was born on 19 July 1885 and automatically inherited the British titles Second Duke of Albany, Earl of Clarence and Baron Arklow. This was because Charles Edward's father, Prince Leopold, the eighth of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's nine children, had tragically died only months before his son was born.

The loss of his father would have a profound impact on the way Charles Edward was raised: he would be doted on by women. His mother, Princess Helena of Waldeck-Pyrmont, a German princess, and his grandmother, Queen Victoria, both played a key role in his upbringing at Claremont House in Surrey. He was also known to be inseparable from his elder sister, Princess Alice of Albany, and as children they had been nicknamed the 'Siamese twins'.

In 1898, at the age of 14, Charles Edward reached the pinnacle of the British establishment when he was sent to Eton College with hopes of attending the University of Oxford – but everything changed in 1899. Charles Edward's uncle, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, was also the sovereign Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, a title that he had inherited through his own father, Albert, husband to Queen Victoria. It was not a very popular title due to the deteriorating relations between Germany and Britain – various members of the British royal family had renounced their claims, and when Alfred had succeeded the Germanic dukedom, he forfeited his seat in the House of Lords. So when Alfred's only son committed suicide and Alfred himself died of cancer a year later, Charles Edward unexpectedly inherited the titles.

Although Germany had become a unified country in 1871, the smaller German states still kept their identities and their monarchs. When it became clear that he would inherit the title, Charles Edward was forced to abandon his life in Britain and head to Coburg. Until he came of age, Prince Ernst of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Alfred's son-in-law, would act as regent and oversee Charles Edward's education in Germany.

RIGHT: CHARLES EDWARD DURING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SAN FRANCISCO IN 1934

As the arms race between Germany and Britain gathered pace, Charles Edward – or Carl Eduard, the Germanised version of his name that he increasingly adopted – ignored the growing conflict of interest between his two countries and continued to return home to Britain when he could. But Charles Edward could not be torn for much longer. In September 1914, World War I began in earnest. Opting for duty over personal preference, Charles Edward decided to offer his support for the Germans.

It was a disastrous decision, and would lead to him being isolated in both his native Britain and on the continent. When Germany lost the war, Kaiser Wilhelm II was forced to abdicate and most minor royals, including Charles Edward, were forced to give up their ducal thrones as well. After all, the perceived arrogance and personal ambitions of the German royals – indeed of royals all over Europe – was seen to have resulted in the needless bloodshed of World War I.

King George V had no choice but to condemn his cousin. Charles Edward was denounced as a traitor, stripped of his titles as well as His Royal Highness status and his property was confiscated. King George realised the very real threat to his own throne from popular discontent if he did not act. In Portugal, republican revolutionaries had shot King Carlos I and his successor Manuel II had been deposed by the same movement in 1910. 1917 saw another cousin, Tsar Nicholas II, lose his throne.

So King George began a project to reform the role of the British monarchy and distance his family from criticism. He changed the name of the royal house to Windsor, after the castle, in 1917 and tried to remain above politics as Asquith and Lloyd George brought in sweeping democratic reforms. King George also refused shelter to Nicholas Romanov, the former tsar, a decision he would no doubt come to regret when the Bolsheviks later brutally murdered him and his family in 1918.

The impact of all of this on Charles Edward was that, although he was allowed to remain in Germany, he was effectively politically isolated. What Charles Edward wanted more than anything was to feel part of something, to feel accepted and to have a place in a new world order. It is perhaps of little surprise, then, that when a little known ex-soldier, an anti-establishment outsider with strong-held beliefs about Germany's place in Europe and the world, began preaching in beer halls about creating a new German empire, Charles Edward would get on board.

It is important to cast aside our own hindsight and remember that, in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, there was a certain level of sympathy for Hitler, even in Britain. Many people felt the terms of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh and the idea of a strong man who could herald in a new era of prosperity and rebuild the crippled country after the disastrous years of Weimar hyperinflation was very appealing.

"WHAT CHARLES EDWARD WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING WAS TO FEEL PART OF SOMETHING, TO FEEL ACCEPTED AND TO HAVE A PLACE IN A NEW WORLD ORDER"

Another reason that far-right movements appealed to Charles Edward, and indeed many other British aristocrats, was that they aimed to bring back what the upper classes regarded as traditional values at a time of uncertainty and change. In early-20th-century Britain, the House of Lords was instrumental in fighting Liberal prime ministers Gladstone and Lloyd George on progressive policies such as Home Rule for Ireland, the extension of the franchise and political and economic reform. Conversely, in the Third Reich, Hitler's Enabling Act would give him all but absolute power, allowing him free rein to carry out his plan without opposition in parliament. Meanwhile the role of women was made abundantly clear, as Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels said: "The mission of women is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world."

The idea of a strong national identity was also central to far-right ideology. Some might argue the patriotism of the Third Reich and the way in which Hitler was revered and idealised was not too dissimilar to the early-20th-century view of monarchy by the upper classes: a strong monarch with military credentials, supported by a ruling elite of wealthy aristocrats was seen as a far more effective ruler than a bookish intellectual who strived for peace and prosperity through compromise, philanthropy and extending the franchise to people the upper classes perceived as undeserving of the vote.

As well as supporting Hitler in the 1930s and endorsing the Nazis in the German parliament elections, which saw Hitler appointed chancellor in 1933, Charles Edward visited Mussolini's Italy several times. Intrigued by his achievements, he brought 70 German friends on one of these trips and was greeted by Il Duce himself, who gifted Charles Edward a fascist dagger. Historian Karina Urbach believes what Charles Edward and even Hitler himself admired about Mussolini was that "Mussolini integrated the Italian royal family into his regime," though the decision of King Victor Emmanuel III to stay on and attempt to manage or support Mussolini would eventually lead to his downfall at the end of the war.

Because of his admiration for royalty, Hitler was keen to utilise Charles Edward. He was appointed president of the German Red Cross and president of the Anglo-German Fellowship.

Charles Edward tried and succeeded in some circles to persuade the British aristocracy that Hitler's policies were a means to justify an end: a strong, prosperous Germany. He also reached

RIGHT: NOW A FULLY-FLEDGED GERMAN PRINCE, CHARLES EDWARD WOULD SOON HAVE TO MAKE A STARK CHOICE ABOUT WHETHER TO SERVE THE DUCHY OVER WHICH HE WAS SOVEREIGN, OR RETURN TO HIS BRITISH HOMELAND AND ABANDON HIS ROYAL DUTY

BELOW: ALONGSIDE SEVERAL HIGH-RANKING NAZIS, CHARLES EDWARD ATTENDS AN EVENT IN 1938

THE TITLES DEPRIVATION ACT OF 1917

How to get rid of peerages and royal titles that are notoriously hard to revoke

When a royal is gifted a title or a member of the establishment a peerage, it is usually expected that they will not only hold that title for the duration of their own life but also pass it on to their descendants for generations to come. Granted by letters patent, which are signed by the monarch, a peerage ordinarily grants the holder a permanent seat in the House of Lords as well as certain other privileges.

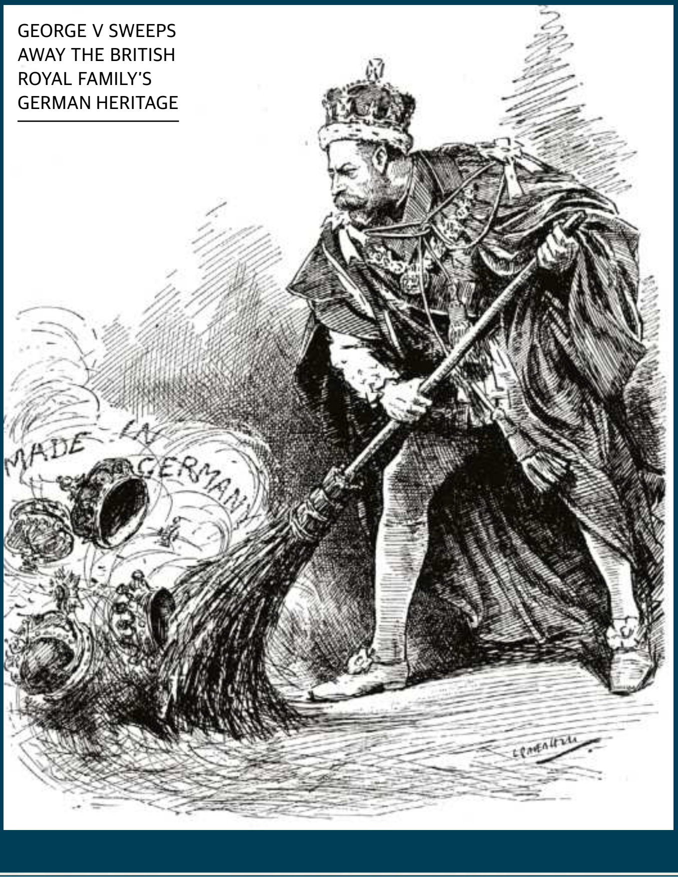
Although in recent times laws have been introduced to remove a peer's membership of the House of Lords, rescinding a title of a peer is still rarely done even when a peer has been sent to prison because it requires an Act of Parliament.

George V, however, made a notable exception. The Titles Deprivation Act of 1917 gave him the power to appoint a special committee of the Privy Council to "report the names of any persons enjoying any dignity or title as a peer or British prince who have, during the present war, borne arms against His Majesty or His Allies, or who have adhered to His Majesty's enemies."

The report of the committee would then be laid upon the table of both the Commons and the Lords, and if for 40 days neither house passed a motion disapproving of the report, it would be sent back to the king. Any names mentioned in the report would then be removed from the Peerage Roll and all writs, royal warrants and letters patent relating to their titles would be subsequently revoked. The act also gave the descendents of those excluded the right to petition the crown for the restoration of their titles.

The report of the Committee was laid before the house containing the names of Charles Edward, Duke of Albany, Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, who was a very distant relation descended from George III, and Heinrich Graf von Taaffe, Twelfth Viscount Taaffe. No objections were made and an Order in Council of 28 March 1919 removed all of them from the roll of the House of Lords.

GEORGE V SWEEPS AWAY THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY'S GERMAN HERITAGE



out to the future Edward VIII, then the Prince of Wales, who was known to be sympathetic to Hitler's aims.

Indeed, contrary to popular belief, many historians believe Hitler did not want to go to war with Britain or Western Europe, at least initially. Rather, his aim was to form an anti-Soviet pact. He did not believe Britain would go through with their ultimatum to declare war if he invaded Poland.

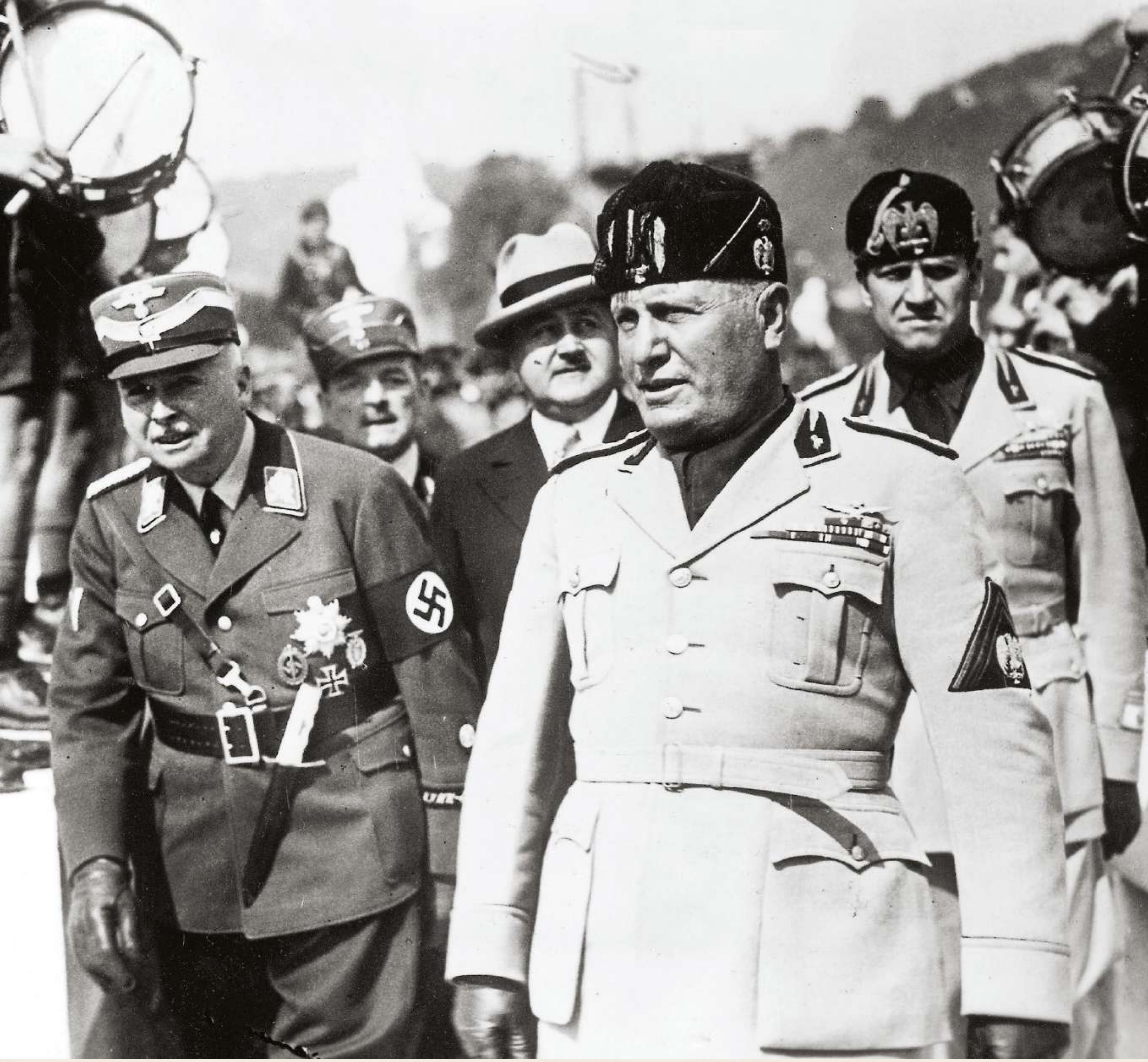
> “ HE WAS THE PERFECT DIPLOMAT, SMOOTHING OVER THE CRACKS AND GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT HITLER HAD PERFECTLY BENEVOLENT INTENTIONS”

And there was lots of sympathy for this viewpoint. Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts hoped to mimic Hitler and Mussolini in Britain. Famous editorials in both the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* by their proprietor, Viscount Rothermere, entitled “Horrah for the Blackshirts”, also offered sympathy for the wider fascist movement at home and abroad by claiming that Hitler and Mussolini were simply trying to fix a broken, outdated political system and appeal to the youth.

Because many people in aristocratic circles privately believed Charles Edward had been treated unfairly, he received a sympathetic ear on his many returns to Britain. This made him incredibly useful to Hitler and he rose to become one of his closest ‘go-betweens’. In Britain, Charles Edward hosted informal gatherings. With no estate or formal title of his own, he was forced to rely on the hospitality of his ever-loyal sister, Princess Alice, now the Countess of Athlone, who allowed him use of her estate, Brantridge Park, deep in the Sussex countryside.

Hitler was impressed at Charles Edward's ability to network and back channel with the British aristocracy, and Charles Edward was made an informal ambassador for Hitler around the world. He visited Rome and spoke with both King Victor Emmanuel III and Mussolini, and in 1938 made another visit to Italy, this time officially on Hitler's behalf. In 1939, he also visited Poland, where he met the president and laid a wreath on the grave on an unknown soldier. He acted like the perfect diplomat, smoothing over the cracks and giving the impression that Hitler had perfectly benevolent intentions.

The relationship between Edward VIII and Charles Edward has been much speculated on. Urbach describes him as “one of the greatest trophies” for the Germans, an assessment that cannot be overstated. Abdication was not a serious prospect until the end of November 1936 so, in the eyes of Hitler, having the king of the largest empire on side would be a huge coup. After all, legally speaking, the king could dissolve parliament and force through new elections.



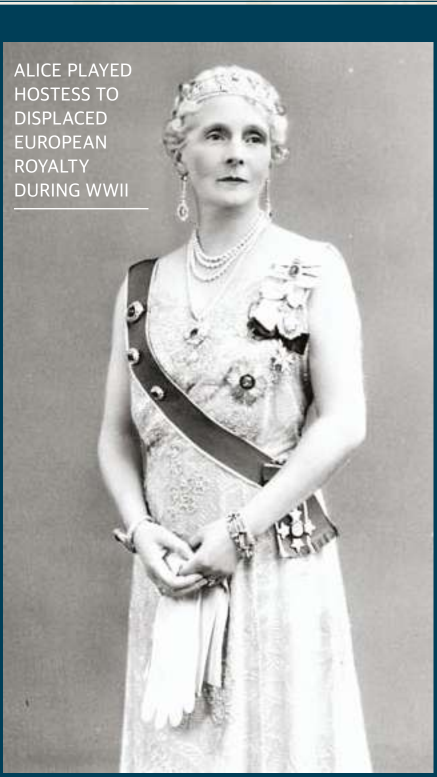
OPPOSITE PAGE: THE DUKE, THIRD FROM THE LEFT ON THE FRONT ROW, POSES WITH THE THURINGIAN DIVISION IN 1915 OR 1916

ABOVE: CHARLES EDWARD ADMIRED THE DICTATOR BENITO MUSSOLINI. HERE, THE TWO ARE PICTURED TOGETHER IN 1938

The way in which the monarchy worked in tandem with the fascist regime in Italy also fascinated Hitler, and his cordial relationship with both Edward VIII and Charles Edward reflects his dreams of one day incorporating the monarchy into the Third Reich. Such an alliance merged traditionalism with National Socialism. The continuity and traditionalism of the old order was not only maintained, but the monarchy could be used as a tool to channel patriotism and cultural superiority. Charles Edward, then, was a concrete link between Britain's 1,000-year monarchy and the relatively new German nation.

To what extent Charles Edward had convinced Edward VIII of the merits of Nazism – perhaps the greatest prize of all, even after he became the Duke of Windsor – and more importantly of stronger Anglo-German ties, however, is debatable. What we know is that Edward hinted on more than one occasion that he would not necessarily uphold the silence on political matters required of a constitutional monarch. In November 1936, Edward visited the Bessemer Steel Works in a Welsh mining village and, remarking on the poverty he saw around him, said, "These works brought all these people here. Something must be done to find them work." Many saw it as an incendiary statement, particularly since a Conservative government was in power, whose relationship with the mining community has always been rocky. Yet many ordinary working-class people lapped it up because Edward epitomised the strong leadership and commitment to prosperity that brought Hitler and Mussolini to power.

The parts played in 1935 negotiations about an Anglo-German Naval agreement by both Charles Edward and Edward VIII – who was then still



ALICE PLAYED HOSTESS TO DISPLACED EUROPEAN ROYALTY DURING WWII

THE ROYAL PROTECTOR

While Charlie consorted with the enemy, his sister's home became a safehouse for Europe's exiled monarchs

Charles Edward and his sister, Princess Alice, maintained a close relationship throughout their lives. When Alice was six, she met Lewis Carroll and complained that, "...he was always making grown-up jokes to us," and that she found him, "awfully silly". This incredibly shrewd judge of character showed an independent woman, traits that no doubt shone through in her decision to remain in close contact with her brother, even as it became clear that he was coming down on the wrong side of history.

In contrast to her brother, Alice's husband, Prince Alexander of Teck, gave up his German titles and was elevated to the British peerage as the Earl of Athlone. Their main residence was Henry III tower at Windsor Castle. The couple's second and more discreet home was at Brantridge Park.

During World War II, she and her husband took up residence in Canada, where he was the governor-general. While her husband threw himself into the war efforts by visiting troops across the nation, Alice played host to several displaced monarchs, whose countries the Nazis had overrun. Among the sovereigns who moved into the Canadian residence of Rideau Hall were the Crown Prince Olav of Norway and his wife, Princess Märtha; Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and her heir, Juliana; King Peter of Yugoslavia and King George of Greece among others. Princess Alice was a friend to all, regardless of their politics. It was here that Alice and the other royal ladies of the house set themselves to work, making clothes for the families that had lost their homes and all their possessions during the war.

“ THE EXTENT OF CHARLES EDWARD’S INFLUENCE ON EDWARD VIII AND OTHER SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY IS DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN”

the Prince of Wales – also highlight the close relationship the two of them had. Such an agreement would help Hitler defeat Stalin. Charles Edward, annoyed at George V’s lack of action, allegedly spoke to the Prince of Wales. On 11 June 1935, the Prince of Wales made a speech at the British Legion suggesting British people should visit Germany and, “stretch out their hand.”

The British foreign secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, suddenly agreed to the German’s demands. Urbach writes, “It seemed obvious that the successful conclusion of the Naval Agreement had something to do with behind the scenes work. The Duke of Coburg certainly saw it as a great success.”

Other than speculation and clever guesswork, the extent of Charles Edward’s influence on Edward VIII and other senior members of the royal family is difficult to ascertain. Much of the correspondence contained in the Royal Archives on the matter is embargoed to protect the integrity of the monarchy. We know that George V’s wife, Queen Mary, was a regular attendee at Charles Edward’s ‘gatherings’ at Brantridge Park, yet, according to the Royal Archives, she only sent one postcard to him in the 1930s, and copies of her correspondence to Edward VIII and his younger brothers – George VI, who succeeded him after he abdicated, as well as the scandalous Prince George, Duke of Kent – is closed after 1918.

One tantalising secret glimpse into the links between Charles Edward, the Nazis and senior members of the British royal family might be inferred from a remarkable telegraph that was intercepted from Hitler’s bunker in April 1945. It read, “The Führer attaches importance to the President of the Red Cross, the Duke of Coburg, on no account falling into enemy hands.” Urbach speculates that this could mean one of two things: “Either Hitler wanted his old confidant… to be whisked to safety or this was a ‘Nero order’, i.e. he wanted him to be murdered before the enemy could get hold of him. One thing appeared certain; the secrets that Hitler and the duke shared seemed to be so important that they needed to be forever hidden from public view.”

As it did for many people, the war exhausted Charles Edward. He developed arthritis and a tumour on his face. Both his son and son-in-law were killed. Captured by the Americans, he was put in a camp but was judged too ill to stand trial. He pleaded not guilty in abstention and, although acquitted of crimes against humanity, was found guilty of aiding and abetting Nazis by a de-Nazification court in 1949.

Five years later in 1954, after the courts had fined him and stripped him of his property, Charles Edward died in the modest flat that he lived in, just down the road from his old dynastic home, Veste Coburg.

TOP LEFT: AFTER HIS SUPPORT FOR KAISER WILHELM II IN WWI, CHARLES EDWARD WAS STRIPPED OF HIS BRITISH TITLES

ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPHED HERE IN FEBRUARY 1941, THE DUKE QUICKLY ROSE TO THE RANK OF OBERBEREICHSLEITER IN THE SA

LEFT: HITLER WITH THE DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG AND GOTHA AT A MEETING OF THE LEADERS OF THE NSKK IN OCTOBER 1935

© Alamy, Getty Images, Mary Evans, Topfoto

GEORGE, DUKE OF KENT

A MOST UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT

The death of Prince George, Duke of Kent, stunned a nation and left his family devastated, but was his untimely demise a tragic mishap, or was a sinister plot behind the crash that killed him?

Written by **Charles Ginger**

Prior to the afternoon of 25 August 1942, RAF Invergordon, a seaplane base located in the Scottish county of Ross and Cromarty, was a place of little interest to those outside its barbed fences or the upper echelons of Britain's military aviation branch. Then, in the wartime summer of 1942, this quiet little Highlands town found itself thrust into a maelstrom of tragedy and conspiracy that has never fully settled since.

At 1.05pm on that fateful day, a Short Sunderland flying boat took off from Invergordon's RAF base with 15 scheduled people on board bound for Reykjavík, Iceland. Piloted by a crew including flight lieutenant Frank Goyen and wireless operator/rear gunner Andrew Jack, this ungainly looking aircraft was in fact host to a famous passenger: Prince George, Duke of Kent. Accompanied by his closest aides, including his private secretary, John Crowther, George was heading to Iceland to perform non-operational duties. He would never reach his official destination.

LEFT: A STRIKING PORTRAIT OF PRINCE GEORGE, DUKE OF KENT, CIRCA 1920

At 1.42pm, the plane carrying George and his fellow passengers ploughed into Eagle's Rock, a hill near the village of Dunbeath in southeast Caithness (approximately 250 miles north of Edinburgh) in foggy conditions. Within moments of the impact the plane's fuel tank exploded, showering debris across the smouldering hillside. Andrew Jack, positioned in the rear of the plane, was flung clear of the wreckage when the tail was torn off. Picking his way towards the shattered body of the aircraft, he began to frantically search for survivors, sustaining serious burns as he dragged the bodies of the duke and others away from the burning metal that encased them. Despite his valiant efforts, nobody else would survive the crash. George, the fourth son of George V, was just 39 years old.

A local doctor by the name of John Kennedy was one of the first people to arrive at the scene, swiftly followed by police officer Will Bethune. The accounts of both men would come to raise a number of questions about the tragedy.

The official inquiry into the Dunbeath air crash concluded that Goyen was to blame, the Royal Air Force Board stating that a navigational error resulting from Goyen failing to take into account the effect of the wind had seen the plane drift off course by 15 degrees before smashing into Eagle's Rock. As far as the RAF was concerned, Goyen's incompetence had cost the lives of everyone onboard save Andrew Jack. While the inquiry was held in secret, on 7 October Sir Archibald Sinclair addressed the House of Commons, proclaiming that the findings had unearthed no evidence of any damage or fault within the plane's engines, and nor was there anything amiss with the navigational systems. Instead, Sinclair asserted, "The responsibility for this serious mistake in airmanship lies with the captain of the aircraft." He concluded that Goyen had "changed the flight plan for reasons unknown and descended through cloud without making sure he was over water and crashed." However, this simple explanation didn't convince everyone, and even a cursory examination of the facts is enough to punch several holes in the official argument.

The first mystery is Frank Goyen himself. Considered one of the most able Short Sunderland pilots in the entire RAF, Goyen was an extremely experienced flyer, with over 1,000 hours of flying time in a Sunderland. Why would a veteran of Goyen's ability fail to consider such a basic element of flying as the impact of wind? And why would he have chosen to fly at such a low altitude in such dense fog (Doctor Kennedy later testified that he deemed visibility on the day to have been "less than 30 feet")?

There is then the significant question of why the plane was even over land at the time of the crash. A normal flight plan from RAF Invergordon to Reykjavík should have seen the Sunderland flying over open ocean at around 4,000 feet all the way to Iceland. What plausible reason did Goyen have to attempt to navigate the Highlands? The answers to these vital questions almost certainly lay within the official papers from the inquiry, yet they, along with Goyen's flight plan and passenger schedule, have all conveniently gone missing. Could the RAF really have been so incompetent as to mislay the findings of an official inquiry into the death of a senior royal, his closest aides and a number of RAF staff?

One theory as to why the RAF's findings quickly vanished and blame was laid at the door of Goyen (who shortly before the flight handed Jack a photo of himself on which was written "with memories of happier times", a gesture that has never been explained) is a government cover-up. While convalescing in hospital, Andrew Jack was visited by RAF officials, who, he insisted, warned him against speaking to anyone about the incident. He was forced to sign the Official Secrets Act and, true to his word, Jack avoided answering any questions on the crash, maintaining a dignified silence until his death in Brighton in 1978 at the age of 56. But what did the RAF and – more intriguingly – the British establishment want to hide? Many believe it was the fact that the Duke of Kent himself was at the controls at the time of the crash. In a 2003 interview, Jack's niece Margaret Harris claimed that her uncle had told relatives that the RAF had asked him to deny the duke was flying the aircraft in order to protect his reputation, a secret that Harris said had gnawed at her uncle's conscience for the rest of his days.

"My uncle knew the pilot wasn't to blame yet he couldn't say anything," she told reporters at *North Wales Live* in December 2003. "As a result he felt he'd let his mate down, and this had a profound effect on him for the rest of his life. He was never the same after the accident, not because of the injuries he sustained, but because of the terrible injustice he was powerless to put right. The thought of the pilot's family believing he had crashed the aircraft was to erode into his conscience until his dying day."

Harris also added that Jack had explained that George had been drinking on the day of the crash and, irritated by a delay to take-off due to the inclement weather, had decided to literally take control. According to Harris, Jack had found the Duke of Kent "slumped in the pilot seat" when he'd raced to the wreckage to try to pull out any survivors. "There was no doubt that he had been flying the plane."

If Jack's account is true, and there seems little reason for him to have lied, then the possibility

"IF JACK'S ACCOUNT IS TRUE THEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A COVER-UP IS GREATLY ENHANCED"

OPPOSITE: A SHORT SUNDERLAND FLYING BOAT, WHICH COULD REACH 210MPH AND FLY FOR 1,780 MILES

THE MYSTERIOUS DEMISE OF FRED NANCARROW

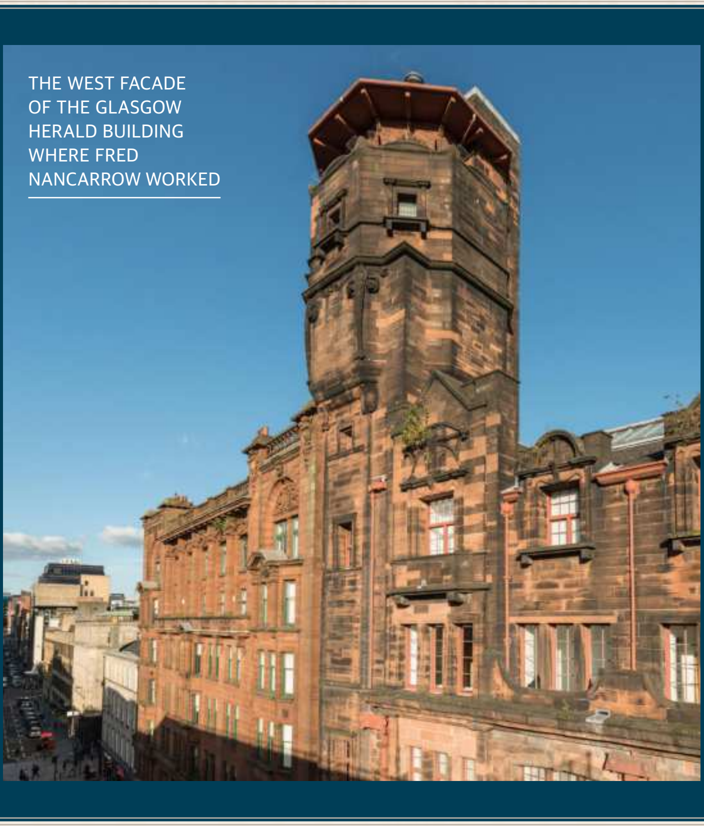
Was a local journalist killed to cover up the truth?

Ten days after the crash that killed the Duke of Kent and 15 others near Dunbeath, a second Short Sunderland, also from 228 Squadron, was downed in the Highlands. Officials were quick to state that the plane had simply run out of fuel, causing it to drop out of the sky and smash into the ground, killing everyone onboard. However, one of the unfortunate passengers was a journalist tasked with investigating the Eagle's Rock disaster that had claimed the Duke of Kent's life.

Fred Nancarrow, an aviation correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald*, was looking into the accident at the time of his death, and he'd also previously been commissioned by Lord Provost, Sir Patrick Dollan, to write a revised version of a 1941 book that Dollan had penned on 602 Squadron, an RAF squadron based in Glasgow. The book was to include details about Rudolf Hess's flight to Scotland and the plot to place the Duke of Kent on the Polish throne.

Dollan made a telling note on Nancarrow's unfinished manuscript in the wake of his death. "The time will come when the full story can be told. Fred Nancarrow has written this at my request – he has done his job well."

It is no great exaggeration to say that the death of the one man tasked with investigating the truth about the duke's demise, a man who was also working on a book that may have revealed top-secret political machinations, was far too convenient for the inquiry charged with looking into the Dunbeath air crash? What exactly did Nancarrow know, and was he killed because of it?



THE WEST FACADE OF THE GLASGOW HERALD BUILDING WHERE FRED NANCARROW WORKED

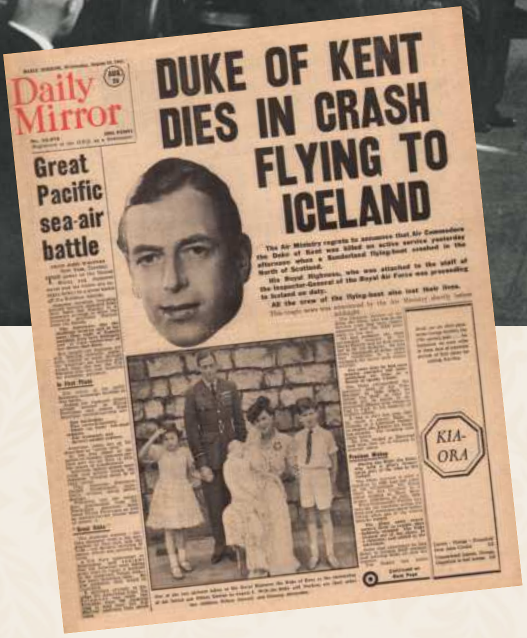
of a cover-up is greatly enhanced. An intoxicated prince crashing a plane full of passengers into a hill would have caused an unprecedented royal scandal. Yet, while this story seems to be entirely plausible, it is far from a conclusive answer.

When Doctor Kennedy arrived at the scene, he quickly examined the bodies of the victims in a bid to see if any of them could be saved. Sadly, all of them were already dead. All *15* of them. Despite the official flight schedule reporting 15 passengers, there was in fact an additional mystery traveller. Their identity has never been revealed, with Harris stating that her uncle "didn't say whether the person was male or female". So who was this person?

The presence of a figure wearing make up at the RAF base prior to take-off has led some to believe that the 16th passenger was in fact the duke's boyfriend (at the time of the accident numerous rumours swirled about George's sexuality, with allegations that the playwright Noël Coward was among his many lovers). If this extra rider was in

RIGHT: THE DUKE IS ALL SMILES BEFORE A FLIGHT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC. A FREQUENT FLYER, PERHAPS HE DID FANCY HIMSELF AS A PILOT ON THAT FATEFUL DAY IN AUGUST 1942

RAF PERSONNEL CARRYING THE COFFIN OF PRINCE GEORGE



Daily Mirror

DUKE OF KENT DIES IN CRASH FLYING TO ICELAND

Great Pacific sea-air battle

The Air Ministry regrets to announce that Air Commodore the Duke of Kent was killed on active service yesterday afternoon when a Sunderland flying-boat crashed in the North of Scotland.

His Royal Highness, who was attached to the staff of the Inspector-General of the Royal Air Force was proceeding to Iceland on duty.

All the crew of the flying-boat also lost their lives.

KIA-ORA

ABOVE: NATURALLY THE TRAGEDY MADE THE FRONT PAGE OF NATIONAL NEWS

> “FAKE PEACE TALKS WITH GERMANY, HAVE BEEN POSITED AS THE REAL REASON FOR THE DUKE’S JOURNEY”

fact the duke’s male lover it would go a long way to explaining the government’s desperation to cover up the truth.

Remarkably, the idea of a hurried effort to protect the deceased George from scandal (be it a drunken crash or the presence of his boyfriend onboard) is not the only reason given for the mystery that still surrounds his death, let alone the most interesting one. For many believe the duke was actually engaged in a top-secret mission at the time of the crash.

In 2001, Peter Brown, the nephew of pilot officer George Saunders, who was also killed in the crash, told a reporter that in August 1942 Saunders had journeyed home to Sheffield to visit his mother. While he was there, he informed her, “I’m just on leave for a couple of days. I’m going on a most important mission, very secret. I can’t say any more.”

Brown’s testament immediately begs a very obvious question: what sort of mission could those onboard the doomed plane have been embarking on? According to some, including PC Bethune, the duke was apparently heading to Sweden.

Ever since George’s death some writers and historians have claimed that an intriguing piece of evidence supporting the theory of a covert mission was found at the crash site: a diplomatic briefcase filled with 100-krona notes handcuffed to his wrist. Despite many stating that no such briefcase existed, in a 1988 radio interview Bethune assured listeners that he’d seen the case with his own eyes.

If one assumes that Bethune’s testimony is accurate, then Sweden is the only logical destination for the plane carrying the Duke of Kent, as 100-krona notes would only have been accepted in Sweden at the time. But why would the duke have been flying to Scandinavia? Outlandish as it may sound, fake peace talks with Germany, arranged via the Swedish government and designed to mislead the Third Reich, have been posited as the real reason for George’s journey. While this claim has never been substantiated, the presence of a prominent royal at a vital strategic meeting seems entirely plausible. And how else to account for the stash of Swedish currency? Perhaps he was bound for Sweden with a more personal motive in mind?

Before his untimely death in the summer of 1942, the Duke of Kent had made regular trips to Poland to inspect British troops stationed there. Afforded the customary treatment that one always received as a member of the royal family, he quickly began to establish close ties with influential Polish figures. According to one theory, George made quite the impression, for a nascent monarchist movement was starting to pose seriously the idea of reinstating the Polish monarchy (the previous Polish king, Stanisław Poniatowski, had been forced to abdicate his throne in 1795 when the country was partitioned by the Russian Empire, Prussia and the Holy Roman Empire), and George was put forward as the ideal candidate to become Poland's new king.

Further fuel was added to these royalist flames when it emerged that, prior to the dual invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939, General Władysław Sikorski, Poland's exiled wartime prime minister, made a similar offer to the duke. The formation of a Polish-Czechoslovakian federation with George at the helm was put forward by Sikorski, who, after the duke's death, described him glowingly as a "true friend to Poland."

As with most of the rumours that still swirl around George's death, concrete proof of this astonishing theory has remained frustratingly elusive. However, in the words of Dr Andrzej Suchcitz, chief archivist at the London Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, "there's no smoke without fire." Could it be that the duke was in fact heading to legitimate talks with the Third Reich in Sweden, and that rumours of the Germans being open to the idea of ceding large sections of Poland (minus Silesia) to the Allies were true? Unless fresh evidence surfaces, it's likely we will never know for sure.

While all of these theories each have their supporters and vary in nature from the politically seismic to the scandalous, none of them could be described as sinister. Either the duke was drunk at the controls, aboard an RAF plane with a secret lover or embarking on a mission of national importance. Regardless of whichever theory is the closest to the truth, they all, their advocates agree, ended in a tragic accident. However, there is one argument that suggests that George's death was in fact a far more sinister event.

It is no little secret that Edward VIII, the king who abdicated his throne in December 1936 in order to wed the American divorcee Wallis Simpson, was a Nazi sympathiser. Detailed accounts have revealed that Edward deemed Hitler a good leader who did well by Germany, and a report dated 25 June 1940 by a Spanish diplomat (Spain was at the time a fascist ally of Germany's) states that Edward openly advocated the bombing of England as a means by which Germany could defeat her stubborn enemy. Yet while Edward's Nazi leanings are well documented, what of his brother's? Was the Duke of Kent also a Nazi sympathiser? Two historians believe he was not only a Nazi supporter, but that they have proof that George was in Scotland at the time of Rudolf Hess's famous flight from Germany on 10 May 1941, and that the two in fact worked to hatch a plan to overthrow Winston Churchill and undermine the British war effort.

After examining over 10,000 files, John Harris and Richard Wilbourn, authors of *Rudolf Hess: Treachery and Deception*, firmly believe that George was planning to stage a coup. "Having weighed up all the evidence, and in light of recent discoveries we have made, we now believe that it was, in fact, a coup attempt centred around Prince George," explained Harris.

If this stunning theory is true, then it would lend credence to the idea that the British establishment was aware of the duke's ambitions and promptly set about engineering an 'accident' that would put paid to his devious plans and avoid the grave threat of a puppet king controlled by the Nazis from ruling Britain. Furnished with this unbelievable information, Churchill would have had no choice but to order the duke's immediate termination.

However, as tempting as it may be to believe a ruthless government plot brought down the plane carrying the Duke of Kent, there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case. It's believed that the Duke of Kent was in agreement with his brother King George VI both about Churchill being the right man to lead the country and the direction of the war effort.

It seems that for all the fantastical theories and conspiracies that continue to shroud the tragic death of a man who was not yet 40 and left behind a wife and three children, George's demise was just that: a tragedy. Whether it was one of his own making or the crash was truly caused by a navigational error, we will likely never know. Unless of course the official inquiry's files ever come to light. After all, they must have been made to disappear for a reason...

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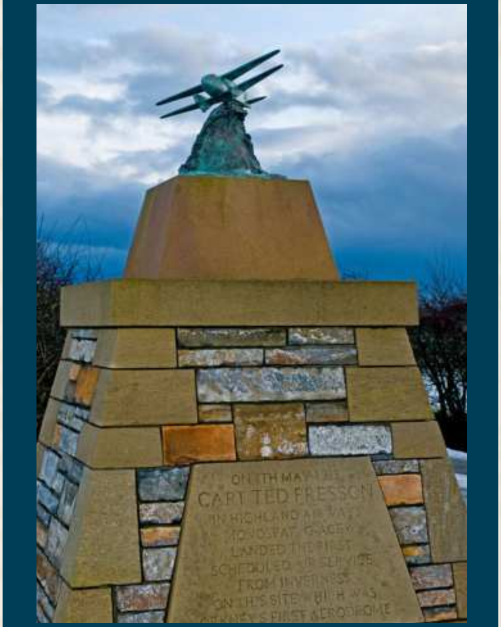
RIGHT: SURROUNDED BY A BLEAK LANDSCAPE, A SOLITARY CROSS STANDS AS A MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF THE CRASH



THE MISSING CHAPTER

Why didn't the author with the only photos of the wreckage mention the crash in his book?

On the morning after the crash that killed the Duke of Kent, Captain E E Fresson flew over the wreckage and took the only photographs of the site. 23 years later his autobiography, titled *Air Road to the Isles*, was published. Strangely, the work of this aviation pioneer made absolutely no mention of the Dunbeath air crash. Why would the only person with images of that fateful incident neglect to include them in a book that was the culmination of a life's work? According to his son Richard, he didn't.

Despite the lack of any mention of the crash in the final, published book, Richard has confirmed that his father's original manuscript included an entire chapter on the crash and his own investigation into it. It wasn't Captain Fresson who removed the crash from his book but his publishers, who chose to pull the chapter just before going to print. Were they pressured by someone to do so? And if so, what were they trying to hide?

ABOVE: A MEMORIAL TO CAPTAIN FRESSON AT KIRKWALL AIRFIELD IN ORKNEY. WHY WERE HIS PHOTOGRAPHS PULLED FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY?

© Getty images; Alamy

EDWARD, DUKE OF WINDSOR

THE FAMILY SHAME

The family's black sheep, Edward VIII ascended the throne to great fanfare but felt compelled to give it up within a year, and died a friendless exile with a ruined reputation

Written by **James Price**

"I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as king as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love… And now, we all have a new king. I wish him and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all! God save the king!"

With these final words, broadcast over BBC Radio on 11 December 1936 at Windsor Castle, the man who had until recently been Edward VIII announced to his former subjects that he had abdicated as king in favour of his younger brother following a tumultuous end to his 325-day reign.

The former king returned to his family, kissing them goodbye and sharing a farewell drink with his brothers. As he left, he bowed to Albert, the younger brother who had succeeded him, and headed off to Portsmouth, where a Royal Navy destroyer was waiting to take him away from the country he had once ruled.

Once the wildly popular King Edward VIII and the shining beacon of hope for the British Empire, he would never feel welcome in Britain again and would live the rest of his life a tragic and somewhat embarrassing outcast of the royal family in effective exile. And the reason he felt compelled to surrender the throne he had been born and raised to sit on, risking constitutional crisis and division across a global empire, was that he wished to marry a divorced woman.

As hard as it is to understand today, the United Kingdom's divorce laws at the time were strict. As the Church of England did not approve of divorce, divorcees were forbidden in law to remarry while their former partner lived. Edward, who as monarch was also the head of the Church of England (ironically the result of Henry VIII's determination to end his own marriage) was as bound to this law as any other. In seeking to marry Wallis Simpson, who had already left one husband and was in the midst of a second divorce, Edward put himself on a collision course with an inflexible church, a disapproving government and many of his subjects.

This decision, taken for love, changed the course of the monarchy and split the royal family - it led to a man who was at first treated with adulation being shunned by his family, driven from his home, kept away from family occasions and having his wife - whose biggest crime was getting divorced - ignored and looked down upon by generations of the royal family.

But despite this tragic story having all the ingredients to be the greatest romantic act of the 20th century, Edward VIII's legacy has become shrouded in sinister suspicions - of extremist political views, ties to Nazism and even suggestions he was the 'traitor king', prepared to be Hitler's puppet in order to regain the throne he'd felt compelled to leave.

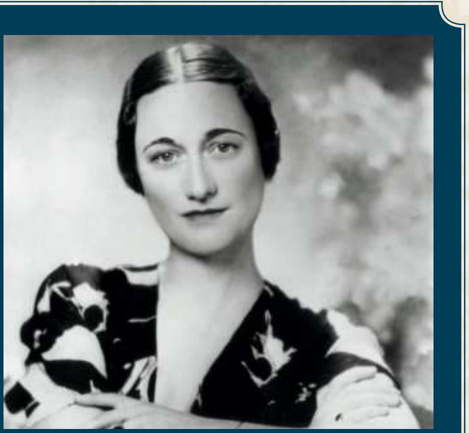
The man who ruled for just 325 days has cast a large and menacing shadow over the Windsor dynasty and continues to draw significant debate and interest today. But how did it come to this?

Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David, or simply David to his family, was not always doomed to tragic failure. Having served during World War I and conducted himself admirably during globe-trotting tours of the British Empire, he was hugely popular in Britain as well as abroad. He also won support for his tours of deprived areas of Britain to champion the common people, and his support for back-to-work schemes. With flair, modernism, good looks and charisma, he won attention and acclaim the world over. He was, according to historian Michael Bloch, "the idol of all classes, built up by the press and official propaganda into an almost godlike figure."

But the Prince of Wales, as he was then, also quickly developed a reputation as a playboy. He surrounded himself with a close circle that largely came from outside court life. His more flamboyant attitudes drew the ire of conservative establishment figures, not least Alan 'Tommy' Lascelles, the future private secretary to George VI and Elizabeth II, who remarked in 1927, "I can't help thinking that the best thing that could happen to him and the country, would be for him to break his neck." It is also telling that this was said to Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who agreed with Lascelles' sentiment.

The prince had a penchant for married women, and had several affairs with prominent socialites, including Freda Dudley Ward and Thelma, Viscount Furness, an American married to a British nobleman. The prince was a fan of all things American, so Lady Furness introduced him to British-American businessman Ernest Simpson and his American wife, Wallis, in 1931. The couple soon joined the prince's inner circle,

INSET: THE WINDSORS DEFIED BRITISH GOVERNMENT ADVICE WHEN THEY TOURED NAZI GERMANY IN 1937, MINGING WITH SOME OF THE PARTY'S HIGHEST RANKING OFFICERS, INCLUDING HITLER HIMSELF



WHO WAS WALLIS?

At one point the most infamous woman in the world, how much is known of the real Wallis?

Wallis Simpson was not a typical candidate to be a future queen. Having grown up far from European royal courts, she was raised in challenging circumstances in Maryland, USA. Her father died when she was very young, leaving her mother to work odd jobs, sell needlework and take in lodgers in order to make ends meet, as well as receive occasional support from wealthy relatives.

She was married to a naval pilot named Lieutenant Win Spencer in 1916, but their marriage was pock-marked with long absences from one another, as his military duties took him across the US and eventually to the Far East. Wallis later followed him there and toured China, exposing her to much of the European colonial society there. The marriage was not a happy one, and by 1927 she was in the process of her first divorce when she met Ernest Simpson, a well-off British-American shipping magnate, in New York. Perhaps giving an insight into her priorities at the time (like many socially mobile people of the period), she was far from head over heels but saw Ernest as a solid bet, noting that he was "kind and good-looking" to her mother, according to Anne Sebba. Ernest swiftly fell in love with Wallis and almost as swiftly divorced his then-wife Dorothea in order to marry Wallis in 1928. The couple soon moved to Britain and found themselves, through mutual acquaintances, in the inner circle of the heir to the throne.

Was Wallis an ambitious schemer who was prepared to destroy an empire in order to get a foot up in society? It is doubtful, as she clearly made efforts to break out of the relationship in those crucial months at the end of 1936. More likely she was ambitious and was excited by the attentions of a prince and then a king.

She also kept in contact with Ernest even as she divorced him. One letter from 1937 confides, "Wherever you are, you can be sure that never a day goes by without some hours' thought of you," while another from 1936 laments, "Wasn't life lovely, sweet and simple," she wrote. "I can't believe that such a thing could have happened to two people who got along so well – at least it never should have been like it is now." That she still had feelings for her husband even as she filed for divorce hints at either an emotionally confused or highly ambitious person – though which is the real Wallis Simpson is impossible to say for sure – if either.

but by 1934 it was clear that Wallis had come to be a great deal more than a mere friend. The clouds of constitutional crisis were already looming over the prince's head.

As a once-divorced and currently married American woman of no significant wealth or family pedigree, it is unsurprising that the Prince of Wales's choice of companion did not meet with approval. His father, a stern disciplinarian, was said to be particularly disapproving of his son's infatuation with Wallis, and believed his son's rejection of his 'duty' to marry and settle down with someone suitable was a sure sign of Edward's unsuitability to rule: "After I am dead, the boy will ruin himself within 12 months," he is prophetically quoted as saying.

But despite this disapproval – or perhaps even because of it, as he had a strained relationship with his father – Edward drew Wallis closer to him, and in 1935 dropped all pretence of secrecy, openly holidaying with her and taking her on tours without her husband. Wallis was said to have treated Edward poorly – he would lavish her with gifts and she in turn would talk down to him and show him little respect. She referred to him in letters to Ernest as 'Peter Pan' – the boyish prince who wouldn't grow up.

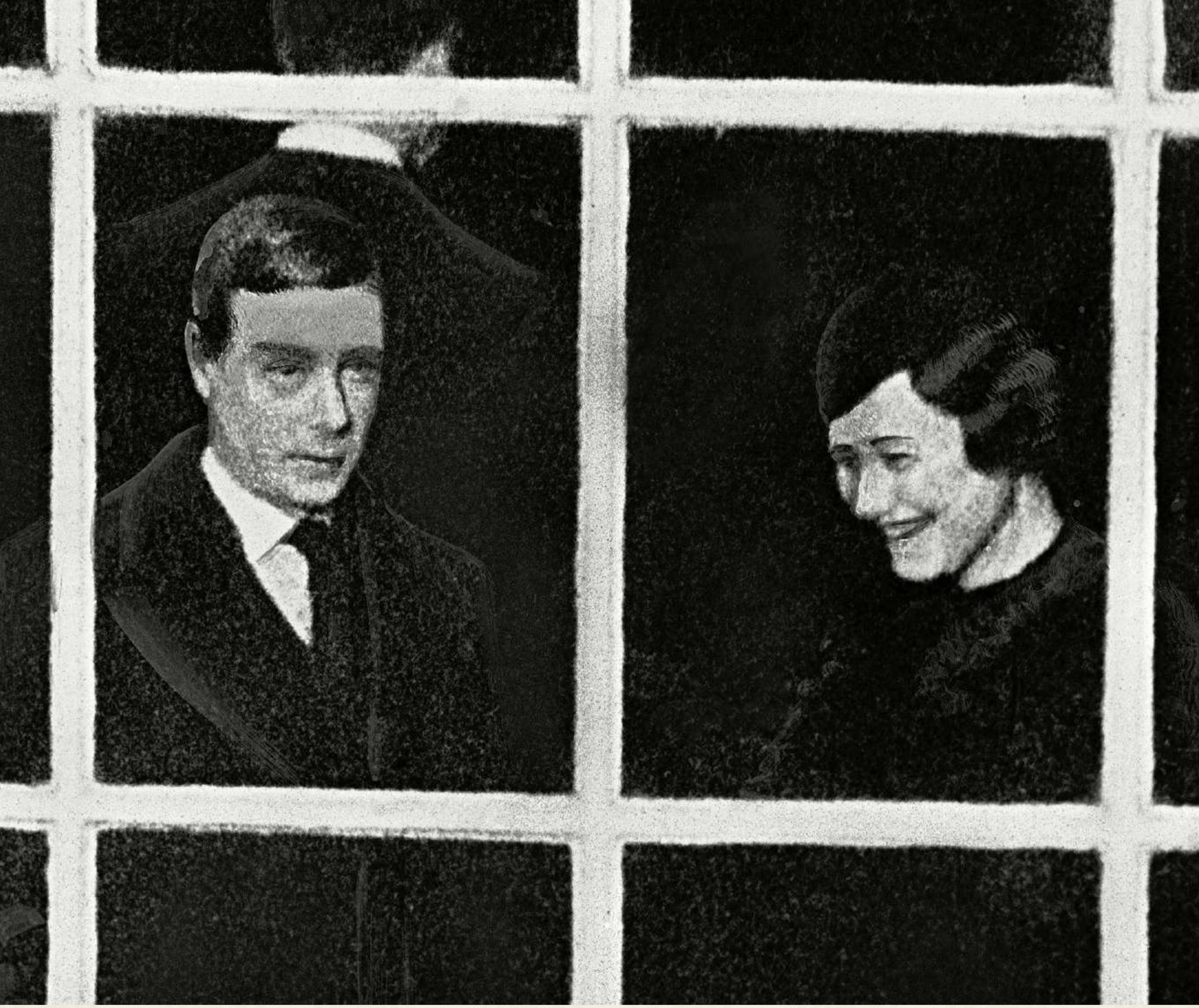
This did little to endear her to the courtiers, but such a free attitude in a constrained world was one of the alluring aspects of Wallis to Edward's eyes. According to Bloch, "There is no doubt that his lonely nature found in her a spiritual comradeship... he felt that he and Mrs Simpson were made for each other." That he was obsessed with her was all too apparent. According to historian Anna Pasternak, courtiers remarked how he was "exalté to the point of madness."

Edward was sheltered from public scrutiny in Britain by a gentlemen's agreement between the press and the royal family to not report personal dealings. So despite his questionable personal dealings and increasing concern from courtiers that the prince was more concerned with his social life than royal duties, he remained hugely popular among all classes of British society. But while the masses worshipped the prince, he himself had misgivings, and writing in 1950 in *Life* magazine claims to have discussed with his brothers the possibility of abdicating the throne once their father died as early as 1935.

The prince could hide from his responsibilities no longer when George V died, and the Prince of Wales became King Edward VIII on 20 January 1936. Edward's account of the immediate aftermath of his father's death reveals how unprepared mentally he was for his new role: "While my mind was still trying to comprehend the profound event that had in that instant

ABOVE: ON 11 DECEMBER 1936, EDWARD VIII GAVE A SPEECH ON THE RADIO, DECLARING HIS INTENTION TO ABDICATE

BELOW: AS WAR RAGED ON, EDWARD AND WALLIS WERE ACCUSED OF BEING NAZI SYMPATHISERS



occurred, my mother did an unexpected thing. She took my hand in hers and kissed it; before I could stop him my brother George, who was standing beside her, stepped forward and followed her example. The action embarrassed me."

Edward VIII's reign was brief, riven with divisions and uncertainty. He immediately broke convention by watching the proclamation of his accession to the throne from the window of St James's Palace – with Wallis Simpson beside him. He also set about making cuts in the royal household. This could have been a modernising act, as the country still reeled from the Great Depression, but while he made these cuts to jobs and salaries he also lavished Wallis with gifts. This did nothing to endear either of them to the household.

Edward was also reluctant to discuss his coronation – a hugely important ceremony. His reason for wishing to avoid it was, he later wrote, because it was a sacred ritual, and he could not face "being crowned with a lie on my lips." He would not cross the line, as he saw it, that would make him king before God. The lie he referred to, of course, was his intention to marry Wallis Simpson.

Wallis herself, it seems, attempted multiple times to halt the divorce. In private letters, she yearns to be out of the situation: "I really must return to Ernest… I am sure you and I would only create disaster together," she wrote to the king in October 1936.

However, Edward would not accept any suggestion of separation, even threatening to kill himself if she left him, according to some accounts. "At the time of the abdication, Edward slept with a loaded gun under his pillow and threatened to kill himself if Wallis forsook him," Pasternak reported. Whether he went to this extreme or not, Edward himself acknowledges that Wallis tried to leave him. Again writing in *Life* in 1950, he recalled how Wallis had messaged him to say, "'Under no circumstances was I to give up the throne'. Even had she been able to make herself

"EDWARD WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY SUGGESTION OF SEPARATION, EVEN THREATENING TO KILL HIMSELF"

ABOVE: IN A BREAK FROM ROYAL PROTOCOL, EDWARD VIII AND HIS MISTRESS, WALLIS SIMPSON, WATCH THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION CEREMONY FROM A WINDOW IN ST JAMES'S PALACE IN 1936 understood, her plea would not have diverted me from my determined course… in the desperate hope of staying the abdication she had, alone, decided to leave me." Wallis, whatever her original intentions, faced no escape.

When Wallis obtained the first stage of her divorce from the court in October 1936, Edward confronted Prime Minister Baldwin, expressing his intentions. "Marriage had become an indispensable condition to my continued existence, whether as king or as man… If I could marry her as king, all well and good. I would be happy and in consequence a better king. But if, on the other hand, the Government opposed the marriage… then I was prepared to go," he declared.

Several alternatives were proposed by the king and his advisers: Winston Churchill advocated delay. A morganatic marriage was also put forward - where Wallis would be his wife but not queen - but Baldwin's cabinet rejected this.

Baldwin laid out the options to the king: abandon the marriage; abdicate the throne; or insist on marriage and have the entire government resign - bringing to a head a constitutional crisis. Edward was not deterred: "If the real intention was to scare me into giving up Wallis by pointing at my head this big pistol of the Government's threatened resignation they had clearly misjudged their man," he later explained.

And so Edward made the decision to abdicate the throne he had been raised to warm, in favour of his "untrained, reluctant and embarrassed successor of far less obvious gifts," as Bloch summarised. Edward signed the papers of abdication at Fort Belvedere on 10 December 1936 in the presence of his brothers.

ABOVE: THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF WINDSOR ENJOY TIME TOGETHER DURING THEIR TIME IN THE BAHAMAS, SAFELY AWAY FROM EVENTS IN EUROPE

The public were dismayed: kept in the dark until just a few days before the abdication, opinion was bitterly divided. Some saw in it a tragedy that inflexible systems and an uncompromising government had forced out the rightful ruler; others saw an unforgivable dereliction of duty. Wallis Simpson became a schemer who tore an empire apart in many eyes.

Had Edward used Wallis as an excuse to escape the responsibility of being king? It is hotly contested, though his determination to marry Wallis whatever the cost suggests that this alone was his aim. Edward, to no great surprise, argued it was both love and duty that drove him: "I certainly married because I chose the path of love, but I abdicated because I chose the path of duty.

THE MARBURG FILES

Buried Nazi documents recovered in 1945 revealed information on Germany's secret plans for the duke and duchess

In May 1945 Allied forces captured a German translator, who took them to a store of secret Nazi documents. Most Nazi paperwork had been hastily destroyed, so its survival was remarkable. Years later, when it was checked by British, French and American historians, a file on the duke and duchess came to light - the Marburg Files. And the contents were explosive.

They detailed telegrams pertaining to the couple and reported conversations, in which the duke was dismissive of the war effort and the chances of British victory. One such conversation was with a Spanish diplomat. According to historian Karina Urbach, Don Javier Bermejillo reported the duke blaming "the Jews, the Reds and the Foreign Office for the war". In a conversation on 25 June 1940, "Bermejillo reported that Windsor stressed if one bombed England effectively this could bring peace," according to Urbach.

Details were also passed on of conversations about the duke returning to the British throne, but the duke replied that it was constitutionally impossible after an abdication. "When [an] agent then remarked the course of war may produce changes even in the British constitution the duchess in particular became very thoughtful."

This also tied in with details of a plot, named Operation Willi, in which the Germans planned to kidnap or persuade the couple to stay in Madrid instead of sailing to the Bahamas, and there be induced to retake the throne with German help, or force a peace with Britain.

Churchill, who heard of the files' existence, worked to have all the documents destroyed, but copies had already been made and sent to the US. He instead persuaded the Americans to not publish, dismissing the entire thing as "tendentious and unreliable". The US president agreed, stating they were "obviously concocted with some idea of promoting German propaganda and weakening western resistance" and were "totally unfair."

ABOVE: THEIR TRIP TO GERMANY IN 1937 CONVINCED HIGH-RANKING NAZIS OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO AID GERMANY DURING WWII

I did not value the crown so lightly that I gave it away hastily. I valued it so deeply I surrendered it rather than risk any impairment of its prestige."

Edward, so wrapped up in trying to secure his marriage, had made little thought of where he would go next. His demands had been to get Wallis's divorce sorted immediately (which did not occur), to be allowed to return to Fort Belvedere, the one place he considered home (he was not, despite his brother's promise) and to be given a pension (which he received, despite already amassing money for this very moment).

Edward - who was made Duke of Windsor - left for the continent. The globe-spanning empire of 500 million people was still simply not large enough for two kings, so he headed to Austria to be reunited with Wallis. There they waited for five months for her divorce, and finally wed on 3 June 1937 in France - though no members of the royal family were in attendance.

That George VI did not attend is no huge surprise, but the absence of any of the family illustrates the growing discord. It had been assumed by many, not least the duke, that he would be able to return to Britain and the royal family within a few years and take on a junior position. Even in 1938, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain argued: "The right course was for the Duke of Windsor to be treated as soon as possible as a younger brother of the king who could take some of the royal functions off his brother's hands," according to Bloch.

"FOR THE FIRST TIME HE HAD NO DIRECTION OR PLACE IN THE WORLD"

But relations became increasingly strained. Resentment bubbled away in the royal family, who disliked the duke's attempts to squeeze money from them and live a celebrity lifestyle, while convictions hardened - particularly in his mother - that the duke had turned his back on his duty to family and country. The Duke of Windsor, on the other hand, was bitterly wounded by the king's refusal to bestow the name 'Her Royal Highness' on Wallis. It was a sore point that rankled for the rest of the duke's life.

It was this lack of proper respect, according to the duke, that led the couple in 1937 to commit another controversial act - a tour of Nazi Germany and a meeting with Hitler. This act and the couple's political outlook has divided historians ever since. Were they Nazi supporters? Writer Andrew Morton argues that the real reason for the tour "was to show Wallis a good time and see exactly what it was like to enjoy a royal tour." The couple were curtsied to, cheered and called 'Your Royal Highness' at every opportunity. But was that the only reason for the visit?

The Duke of Windsor, following his abdication, for the first time in his life had no direction or place in the world. That he was trying to stay relevant and carve out a role for himself on the global stage is clear. But there is also a significant body of evidence suggesting the duke was also,

BELOW: IN 1967, THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF WINDSOR WERE INVITED TO CELEBRATE THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF EDWARD'S MOTHER, QUEEN MARY

“HE REMAINED ON BAD TERMS WITH HIS MOTHER”

if not a full-blown Nazi, then sympathetic. The duke's political opinions are mired in mystery. While many historians, such as Carolyn Harris, argue that the visit to Germany was because the duke “seems to have envisioned a diplomatic role for himself as a mediator between Britain and Germany,” others argue it was a sign of his political allegiances. Morton says, “he was certainly sympathetic… even after the war he thought Hitler was a good fellow and that he'd done a good job in Germany, and he was also anti-Semitic, before, during and after the war.”

These opinions have been fuelled by quotes attributed to Hitler himself by the likes of the less-than-trustworthy Nazi Albert Speer. He reported Hitler saying, “If [the duke] had stayed, everything would have been different. His abdication was a severe loss for us.” Released FBI files also suggest the duchess was in a relationship with Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Nazi foreign minister, and later passed him sensitive information.

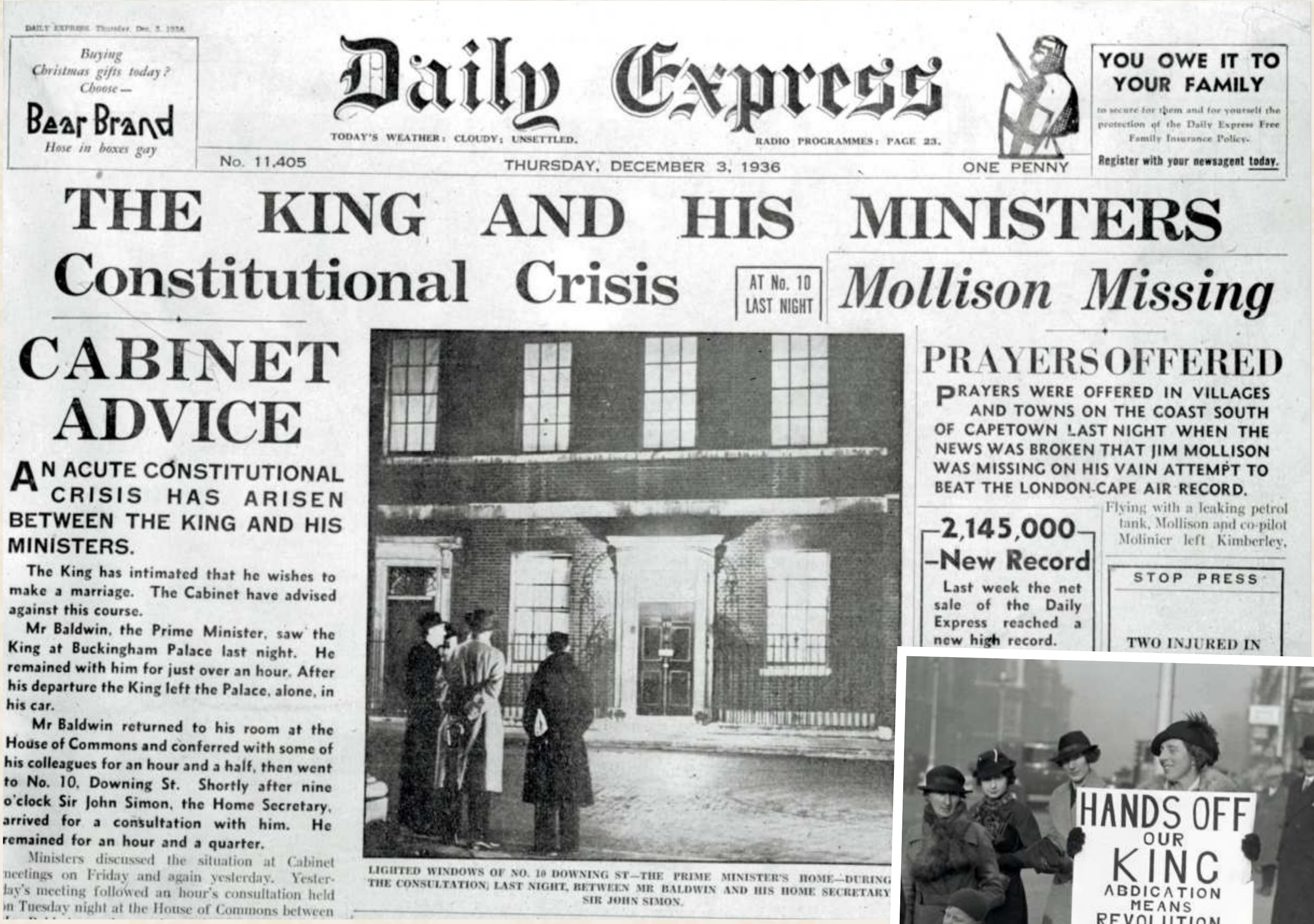
But whatever the real reasons for the visit, it has tarnished his reputation and haunted his legacy. The tragic king was to become the traitor king because of this association.

It seems evident, however, that the duke wanted peace, almost at any cost. Having witnessed the horrors of WWI, he was far from alone in wanting to avoid conflict. The policy of appeasement towards the Nazis by the British in the 1930s was pursued almost until the declaration of war. In 1939 the duke took to the radio to broadcast a message of peace. Whether the duke continued to work towards this end even during the war is suggested. Secret Nazi files uncovered after WWII revealed documents about the Windsors suggesting they were critical of the war and supportive of peace with Germany.

At the outbreak of war the duke and duchess had been residing in France. The duke promptly offered his services as a go-between for the British and French militaries. Upon the German conquest, the couple headed to fascist Madrid, before being encouraged on to neutral but British-friendly Portugal. With rumours circulating about the duke and duchess's political affinities, as well as the couple being dangerously exposed on the continent, Churchill hatched a plan to send the duke to govern the Bahamas.

TOP: THE COUPLE WERE FINALLY ABLE TO MARRY ON 3 JUNE 1937, WHICH ALSO JUST HAPPENED TO BE HIS FATHER GEORGE V'S BIRTHDAY – THE SAME FATHER WHO WAS VOCAL IN HIS DISAPPROVAL OF WALLIS SIMPSON

RIGHT: THE DUKE AND DUCHESS WERE DEEPLY ATTACHED TO THEIR PUGS, WHICH WERE REPORTEDLY ILL-TRAINED AND INDULGED



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TODAY'S WEATHER: CLOUDY; UNSETTLED. RADIO PROGRAMMES: PAGE 23.

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THE KING AND HIS MINISTERS

Constitutional Crisis

AT No. 10 LAST NIGHT

Mollison Missing

CABINET ADVICE

AN ACUTE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS HAS ARISEN BETWEEN THE KING AND HIS MINISTERS.

The King has intimated that he wishes to make a marriage. The Cabinet have advised against this course.

Mr Baldwin, the Prime Minister, saw the King at Buckingham Palace last night. He remained with him for just over an hour. After his departure the King left the Palace, alone, in his car.

Mr Baldwin returned to his room at the House of Commons and conferred with some of his colleagues for an hour and a half, then went to No. 10, Downing St. Shortly after nine o'clock Sir John Simon, the Home Secretary, arrived for a consultation with him. He remained for an hour and a quarter.

Ministers discussed the situation at Cabinet meetings on Friday and again yesterday. Yesterday's meeting followed an hour's consultation held on Tuesday night at the House of Commons between

LIGHTED WINDOWS OF NO. 10 DOWNING ST—THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOME—DURING THE CONSULTATION, LAST NIGHT, BETWEEN MR BALDWIN AND HIS HOME SECRETARY SIR JOHN SIMON.

PRAYERS OFFERED

PRAYERS WERE OFFERED IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS ON THE COAST SOUTH OF CAPETOWN LAST NIGHT WHEN THE NEWS WAS BROKEN THAT JIM MOLLISON WAS MISSING ON HIS VAIN ATTEMPT TO BEAT THE LONDON-CAPE AIR RECORD.

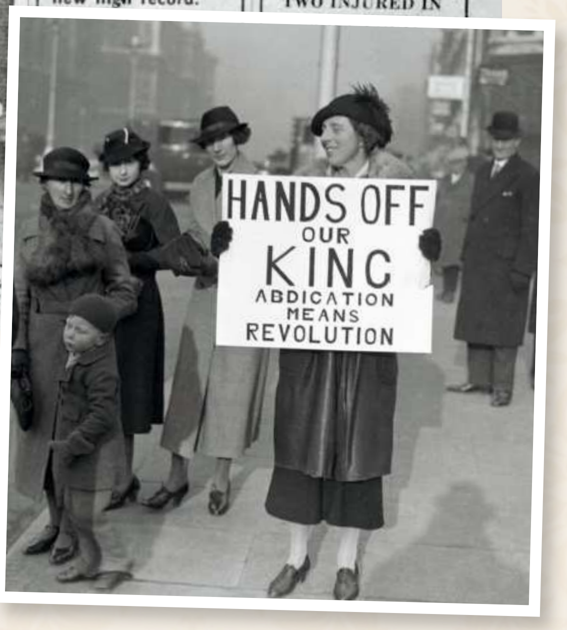
Flying with a leaking petrol tank, Mollison and co-pilot Molinier left Kimberley,

—2,145,000—
—New Record

Last week the net sale of the Daily Express reached a new high record.

STOP PRESS

TWO INJURED IN



TOP: MUCH OF THE BUILD-UP TO THE ABDICATION CRISIS WAS PLAYED OUT IN PRIVATE IN BRITAIN, UNTIL THE FINAL TEN DAYS – WHEN SUPPORTERS OF THE KING AND GOVERNMENT RACED TO SWAY PUBLIC OPINION

ABOVE RIGHT: AS NEWS BROKE OF CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS, SPONTANEOUS SUPPORT ERUPTED FOR THE KING

The duke was far from delighted by this suggestion, and his reluctance even reportedly prompted Churchill to threaten him with court martial. The duke finally relented, and remained in the Bahamas from August 1940 until the end of the war. The duchess was said to call it "our St Helena" in reference to the tiny, remote island Napoleon Bonaparte had been exiled to. For them it was not a chance to serve in part of the British Empire: it was a banishment.

Following the conclusion of WWII, the duke resigned as governor and returned to Europe. But the time apart and the strains of war did not make a family reunion any more likely. Hoping to get a position as a diplomat of sorts between Britain and the US in 1945, his hopes were dashed as the royal family remained distant. Whether his apparent Nazi sympathies bred resentment and mistrust, it is not entirely clear, although King George VI was said to have read the Marburg Files: Sir Alexander Cardigan revealed the king "fussed about the Duke of Windsor's file and the captured German documents," according to Bloch.

The duke and duchess remained in temporary and borrowed homes in France, entertaining guests and hosting parties. But it was far from a stimulating existence, and the duke tried and failed repeatedly to weave a path back into the royal family. Not even the peacetime leadership of Churchill in 1951 brought a reconciliation. The duke's most notable returns to Britain were to attend the funerals of his family – starting with his brother and king, George VI, in 1952.

Following George's death, Elizabeth ascended the throne, although again this did not precipitate a reconciliation. The duke even stayed away from the coronation, conveniently arguing that a former sovereign was not a fit guest at the ceremony.

He remained on particularly bad terms with his mother, who had been badly affected by losing three of her sons – and despising a fourth. The antipathy was mutual, and when the duke returned to Britain for her funeral in 1953, the words he wrote to Wallis, who was forbidden from coming, were far from heartbroken: "I'm afraid her veins have always been as icy cold as they are in death." This bitterness was extended to the rest of his family: "What a smug stinking lot my relations are, and you've never seen such a seedy worn-out bunch of old hags most of them have become."

Following his brother's death the duke seems to have become resigned to his state of exile, and the couple finally bought their own property in France. The duke and duchess were called 'Your Royal Highness' and the servants wore royal livery. The duke spent much of his time writing his memoirs and articles for magazines. He never held an official office again.

There were small moments of reconciliation – both he and the duchess were invited to Britain in 1967 to attend the unveiling of a plaque to the duke's mother. It was a gesture made by the Queen, though the Queen Mother was notably absent, having also grown to detest the duke and duchess. Clearly there was too much bad blood to ever heal these wounds within the family.

The duke died of throat cancer in France on 28 May 1972 at the age of 77. He was visited in his final days by Queen Elizabeth – another final gesture of reconciliation. He was finally to return to Britain after death, and was buried in the royal cemetery near Windsor Castle. Wallis, the woman the duke chose over a throne, was to join him there 14 years later.

© Getty; Alamy

A TOUCH OF CRIME

86 Murderous mistress
While Edward was known for his many affairs, he didn't expect one of his lovers to become a murderer

94 The princess, the gangster and the saucy snaps
It was Britain's most audacious bank robbery, but the scandal that followed overshadowed the heist and made it an infamous royal disgrace

98 A frightful thing happened on the way to the palace
Travelling home from a dreary engagement, Princess Anne narrowly escaped an attempted kidnapping with her life

86

98

EDWARD, DUKE OF WINDSOR

MURDEROUS MISTRESS

While Edward was known for his many affairs, he didn't expect one of his lovers to become a murderer

Written by **Jessica Leggett**

In the early hours of 10 July 1923, three gunshots echoed through London's Savoy Hotel. Prince Ali Kamel Fahmy Bey was on the floor, blood trickling from his head. His beautiful wife, Maggie, stood behind him, a gun in her hand. About three kilometres away, her former lover, Edward, Prince of Wales, was at a dinner party in Mayfair. Little did he know that he was about to enter a race against time to save himself and the monarchy from one of the most sensational scandals of the 20th century.

Although remembered for his abdication in 1936 in order to marry the woman he loved, Edward's head had been turned by a number of women before Wallis Simpson. Nevertheless, it was one woman in particular who opened him up to the world of lustful promiscuity – his first mistress, Marguerite Marie Alibert, known to her suitors as the elusive 'Maggie Meller'.

When Edward met Maggie, he was a young, sexually inexperienced Prince of Wales while she was a high-class French courtesan. He was 22 years old and Maggie, at 27, was five years his senior. A relentless gold digger and social climber, Maggie had worked her way up from the gutters of Paris to its luxury brothels, where she entertained the most influential men in France.

Her desire to seek wealth and comfort wasn't surprising considering she lived on the streets after giving birth to her only child, Raymonde, at the tender age of 16. Unable to care for her daughter, Maggie placed her into care and didn't see her again for a number of years.

Turning to prostitution was the only way Maggie could survive and she evolved into a sexy, charismatic woman who knew how to play with the temptations of men and entice them into her world. Maggie's connection to aristocratic, wealthy men gave her the opportunity to move in some of the most influential circles in society – and opened the door to meet Edward.

She first met the prince through a friend at a restaurant in Paris in April 1917 and he was already fond of French women, having developed a taste for them after a liaison with a prostitute the year before. Maggie, alluring, charming and catastrophically beautiful, blew the prince away, and he was instantly besotted with her. Over the next few months, Edward spent as much of his time with Maggie as possible and lavished her with gifts, while her offerings of erotic literature unveiled a sexual side to the prince that he never knew existed.

Edward wrote passionate love letters to Maggie – a habit he would maintain with all of his mistresses – and their contents were nothing short of scandalous, full of salacious comments and declarations. To his French lover, he complained about his strict upbringing and criticised his father, King George V. Foolishly, he also included harsh judgements regarding Britain's conduct in World War I. If exposed, these letters could cause an outcry that would engulf the monarchy, but the naïve prince clearly trusted his lover.

Edward's gallivanting around Paris with a prostitute didn't go unnoticed and started to cause concern among his friends and family. By the end of 1917, Edward had been dispatched to Italy, an act that not only upset him but failed to sever his feelings for Maggie. The affair continued for 18 months, with Edward desperate to return to see her in Paris whenever he could.

Then the prince's notoriously fickle nature changed everything. At the beginning of 1918, he

RIGHT: THE PRINCE OF WALES HAD MANY AFFAIRS BEFORE MARRYING WALLIS SIMPSON, BUT HIS ROMANCE WITH MARGUERITE ALIBERT TURNED SOUR WHEN SHE KEPT HOLD OF HIS SCANDALOUS LETTERS AND BLACKMAILED HIM WITH THEM

met Freda Dudley Ward, wife of a British Member of Parliament, during an air raid in London. The prince was an insecure and fanciful man whose infatuations could change from hot to cold within a day. He immediately became obsessed with Freda upon meeting her and soon showered her with devotion.

Of course, this also meant that Edward's interest in Maggie suddenly disappeared and he soon abandoned his relationship with her. Edward, either too innocent or too ignorant, expected Maggie to accept his decision quietly and to depart from his life. He clearly didn't know the woman he was dealing with.

Above all else, Maggie was cunning. She had not engaged in the affair for love or pleasure – Edward was the perfect target to exploit for money and prestige and she was not about to let him go. All of those suggestive and slanderous letters were still in her hands. Maggie had a ticking time bomb and she knew it, gleefully reminding Edward of the same in November 1918.

In a letter to his adviser, Edward discussed Maggie's blackmail, calling her letter a "regular stinker". He had wrongly assumed that his ex-lover would have destroyed their correspondence, complaining that he "didn't think she would turn nasty". He lamented that "The whole trouble is my letters and she's not burnt one!" It seemed that Edward was facing a precarious situation until a stroke of luck saw Maggie's attention diverted elsewhere.

In 1919, Maggie met Charles Laurent, a rich young air force officer. Knowing that she could achieve the wealth and security she craved far easier with him than with Edward, she soon abandoned her blackmail. Maggie and Laurent were quickly married and she began to live the indulgent lifestyle she had always wished for.

In fact, Maggie had become so wealthy that she sent for her daughter and placed her in a boarding school in England to receive a good education. Raymonde also took Laurent's surname and it was clear that mother and daughter had finally reached a position that was considered respectable in society. For now, it seemed the prince had managed to escape from the scheming clutches of his former mistress.

Edward continued to see Freda and renewed his habit of sending obsessive and passionate letters, despite it not ending well for him the last time. As for Maggie, she quickly grew tired of her new husband and divorced him a mere six months into their marriage. This time, Maggie left with a hefty divorce payment that allowed her to continue living the decadent lifestyle to which she had become accustomed. She continued to fund her daughter's education, established her own household and was a regular in Paris society. Through her wiles and charms she had finally achieved the life of which she had always dreamed. But it wasn't enough; she wanted more.

As luck would have it, she soon found herself in the company of a 23-year-old Egyptian 'prince', Ali Kamel Fahmy Bey. Although remembered as

"HE CLEARLY DIDN'T KNOW THE WOMAN HE WAS DEALING WITH"

ABOVE LEFT: PRINCE ALI, MAGGIE'S MURDERED HUSBAND

ABOVE RIGHT: MARGUERITE 'MAGGIE' ALIBERT WAS A GLAMOROUS, HIGH-CLASS FRENCH COURTESAN WHO CHARMED THE YOUNG PRINCE OF WALES a prince, he wasn't born a royal. Ali's family was extremely wealthy thanks to the cotton trade and his father had also funded a hospital in Cairo. As a show of gratitude, Egypt's king had bestowed the honorary title of prince upon him.

Prince Ali was a regular on the Parisian scene and soon became enamoured with Maggie, who was ten years his senior. It was almost parallel to the romance that Maggie had with Edward – Ali requested a formal introduction through a mutual friend and his obsession grew. The prince was determined to marry her and, although she desired his wealth, Maggie hesitated.

When Ali returned to Egypt, he quickly sent for his love, claiming that he was gravely ill. Upon her arrival, the prince once again insisted that they marry. Maggie's concern was that her lifestyle would change dramatically if she moved east and that she would have to relinquish her love for couture clothing. To please her, the prince drew up a contract that stated Maggie could continue to dress in Western clothes as long as she converted to Islam and that she could file for divorce any time she wished. Maggie accepted and the couple were married in Cairo, Egypt, in December 1922.

The newlywed bliss soon soured for the couple. Both Maggie and Ali had quick and volatile tempers that flared frequently, often when they were in public, but that was where the similarities ended. While Ali desired an obedient, submissive wife, Maggie wanted to continue living the wealthy, independent lifestyle that she had carved out for herself. The liberated promiscuity that had once attracted the prince now made him angry and jealous and Maggie began to feel like a captive in her marriage.

It was soon clear to Maggie that she would not be able to leave her husband and walk away with his money as easily as she had done with Laurent. Her wish to leave was made even more difficult when she realised that after their marriage, Ali had revoked the clause in the marriage contract that allowed her to divorce him. Maggie started to sleep with a gun under her pillow.

The couple arrived at London's Savoy Hotel on 1 July 1923, intending to stay for a month. As usual, they quarrelled daily, both in private and public. During the first week, Maggie, who was in ill health, requested the house doctor at the Savoy to examine her. London at the time was experiencing a bout of hot, humid and sticky weather that was aggravating her condition.

She was suffering from painful haemorrhoids and told the doctor that they were the result of her husband's brutish and unnatural sexual tastes, that Prince Ali "had torn her". Maggie even went as far as to ask the doctor to provide her with a certificate that supported her claims, although in the end he didn't give it to her. It was clear that Maggie was already sowing the seeds for divorce and was trying to collect supporting evidence.

By 9 July, tensions between Maggie and Ali had reached boiling point. The couple had spent the evening at the theatre watching the ironically titled *The Merry Widow* before returning to the Savoy for dinner, where they caused disruption by fighting and screaming at each other in the middle of the restaurant. Maggie became so incensed that she grabbed a bottle of wine and threatened to smash it over the prince's head, who in turn bit back that he would do exactly the same to her.

Calm was eventually restored after the restaurant staff intervened and Maggie decided to return to their room. Ali chose not to join her, instead hailing a taxi and travelling to Piccadilly, despite the thunderstorm brewing outside. According to his private secretary, Mr Said Enani,

RIGHT: MAGGIE WAS KNOWN FOR HER BEAUTY AND SHE KNEW HOW TO LURE MEN IN

THE OTHER LOVES OF EDWARD'S LIFE

Aside from Maggie, Edward had many romantic relationships throughout his youth, leading to his reputation as the 'playboy prince'

Lady Rosemary Leveson-Gower

Edward met Lady Rosemary Leveson-Gower during WWI as she worked as a Red Cross nurse in France. He saw her caring treatment of soldiers and fell in love, but his father refused to let them marry. Rosemary married two years later and was killed in the Meopham air disaster in 1930. Edward never forgave his father and his subsequent affairs were all with married or divorced women.

Freda Dudley Ward

Edward fell head-over-heels in love with Freda Dudley Ward, a married woman, in 1918 and ended his affair with Maggie as a result. Freda remained Edward's mistress for another 16 years and was one of his closest confidantes. Their relationship finally ended when he was introduced to Wallis Simpson in 1934.

Viscountess Thelma Furness

Edward's affair with Thelma Furness, Viscountess Furness, an American divorcée, began in 1930 and she was regularly seen at his side. It was Thelma who introduced him to her friend, the now infamous Wallis Simpson, who would go on to supplant Thelma in the prince's affections in 1934.

ABOVE: THE YOUNG PRINCE OF WALES WAS ONLY 22 WHEN HE WAS INTRODUCED TO MAGGIE IN PARIS

who had accompanied the couple to London, the prince had most likely gone to visit a nightclub or to solicit a prostitute.

At 2am on 10 July, the prince returned to the hotel and fought with his wife for the last time. Half an hour later, the night porter, John Beattie, heard the couple arguing and saw the prince stumble out of their room, scratch marks all down his face.

"Look! Look what the bitch has done!" Ali exclaimed to the shocked porter. Quietly asking him to calm down, the porter carried on down the corridor while the prince whistled for Maggie's dog, which had run out of their hotel room. Beattie had just turned the corner when he heard them behind him – three gunshots.

He rushed back. There, lying on the floor, was Ali with blood seeping from his bullet wounds. Maggie stood behind her husband, the gun in her hand. She dropped it when she saw the porter. "What have I done?" she cried. Ali was rushed to hospital where he died from his injuries.

At that very moment, Edward was socialising in Mayfair, completely unaware that, less than three kilometres away, his former mistress had blood on her hands. He had carried on as normal since the days of his affair with Maggie and remained enthralled with Freda, an affair that would continue for another 11 years until he met Wallis Simpson. For Edward, Maggie was a faded memory, an unfortunate folly from his youth.

“A COVERT OPERATION WAS REQUIRED TO COVER UP THE EVIDENCE AND PROTECT THE MONARCHY”

He was completely oblivious to the fact that the nightmare he had thought ended four years ago was about to come back with a vengeance.

For Maggie, it seemed there was no way out. She had publicly shot her husband and had been caught red-handed holding the weapon. Once her reputation as a gold digger and her career as a courtesan were exposed to the court, a guilty verdict was sure to follow.

But cunning Maggie had a smoking gun up her sleeve – she still had Edward’s letters, damning evidence that could forever blacken not only his reputation but also that of the monarchy. Desperate times called for desperate measures – Maggie’s blackmail would not be the empty threat it was before.

When the royal household discovered the identity of the Savoy murderess they were mortified. Maggie’s upcoming trial was already creating a sensation in the press all around the world, and it would delve into her background and expose her past illicit relationships, including her affair with Prince Edward. They couldn’t risk her exposing him to the court and the public, or allow her to produce the letters that would corroborate her story and cause a scandal.

A covert operation was required to cover up the evidence and protect the monarchy, but there was only one way to ensure that Maggie wouldn’t speak: she had to have her innocence declared, freedom secured and, above all, her neck saved from the hangman’s noose.

ABOVE LEFT: SIR EDWARD MARSHALL HALL, MAGGIE’S DEFENCE LAWYER

ABOVE: THE SAVOY HOTEL, WHERE PRINCE ALI WAS FATALLY SHOT DEAD BY HIS WIFE, MAGGIE

Negotiations to get the letters from Maggie began. Major Ernest Bald, a friend of Edward’s and one of Maggie’s former lovers, was constantly sent to Holloway Prison between July and August 1923 to mediate between Maggie and the royal household. Maggie eventually agreed to surrender her letters to Clark Carr, a diplomat in Cairo, where she had stored them for safekeeping.

On 21 August, Carr travelled from Cairo to London and Edward interrupted his holiday at Balmoral, Scotland, to return to London for just one day to collect the letters and confirm that they were all there. Of course, they weren’t. Maggie, thinking ahead, had kept hold of some of them as insurance, just in case the bargain she had struck for her life was renounced.

Exactly two months after the shooting, Maggie was charged with Prince Ali’s murder on 10 September and her trial began at the Old Bailey in London. A letter from the foreign secretary, Lord Curzon, to his wife reveals the fears that existed over her case: “The French girl who shot her so-called Egyptian prince in London and is going to be tried for murder, is the fancy woman who was the Prince’s ‘keep’ in Paris during the war, and they were terribly afraid that he might be dragged in. His name is to be kept out.” And so it was. Edward’s schedule was suddenly changed and, instead of continuing on a tour around Britain, he was to visit Canada in September, when Maggie’s trial would be in full swing.

On paper, the case against Maggie was ironclad. There was a key witness, the porter, who confirmed he had caught Maggie standing by her husband's body, holding the gun. A weapons expert testified that the firearm Maggie used, a .32 Browning semi-automatic pistol, could not have fired three shots automatically and would have required a deliberate, manual movement from her to fire more than once. Her public, violent fights with her husband were well known. There was no doubt – she had killed Prince Ali.

It was clear that the defence would have their work cut out for them. Enter Sir Edward Marshall Hall, one of the most infamous and formidable barristers of the time, who was hired to defend Maggie. To deflect attention away from his client, he began a complete character assassination on her husband.

Hall described Ali as a violent, sadist brute who would attack his innocent European wife and that poor Maggie had acted in self-defence. He even implied that the prince and Enani had engaged in a homosexual affair, which was considered one of the most abhorrent and evil of acts at the time. According to Hall, Maggie's only and "greatest mistake" was to marry a man who saw her as nothing more than an object to do with as he pleased.

As a remarkable public speaker, Hall's theatrical performances added to the sham of the trial. In a re-creation designed to terrify the jury, he crouched down in front of them as the vengeful Ali, snarling and threatening. He quickly changed

LEFT: THE MEDIA FRENZY OUTSIDE THE OLD BAILEY DURING MAGGIE'S MURDER TRIAL

"ON PAPER, THE CASE AGAINST MAGGIE WAS IRONCLAD"

positions and turned into the scared Maggie, reaching for the actual murder weapon and pretending to fire towards the jury, who now assumed the role of the dangerous prince.

Maggie's performance as the tearful, abused wife did wonders to blind the jury as she claimed that her husband would get his servants to spy on her, even when she was "in a state of undress". According to her story, life as a Muslim wife had turned Maggie into a prisoner in her own home and the fact that she could not speak English made her seem even more pitiful. Hall and Maggie's version of events completely contradicted those of the witnesses, but it didn't matter. Prince Ali had already been turned into a villain who had got his comeuppance.

The prosecution wanted to attack Maggie's character in the same way that Hall had maligned Ali's. The jury needed to know that Maggie was a master of deception who lured in wealthy men with her skills as a high-class courtesan. The judge, Justice Rigby Swift, decided otherwise. He ruled that Maggie's past relationships, her career as a prostitute and her reputation as a gold digger couldn't be brought in front of the jury.

This undoubtedly changed the outcome of Maggie's trial – the jury were presented with only one side of the story, the side that depicted Maggie as a scared, abused wife who killed her dangerous husband to save her own life. Clearly, the royal household had come through on their end of the duplicitous bargain. The trial was a complete joke designed to seek Maggie's acquittal through any means necessary.

It took less than an hour for the jury to declare Maggie not guilty. She was free to go, even though it was clear that she had killed her husband. The verdict was celebrated in Britain, where the public had closely followed the trial of the woman subjected to the cruel beatings of her savage husband. On the other hand, the Egyptians were outraged. Not only had this woman escaped scot-free with the murder of one of their wealthiest men, but the nature and reputation of Egyptian men and their way of life had been severely tarnished as a result of Hall's passionate and imaginative defence of his client. The cover-up was obvious to those in the know, but there was little that could be done.

Edward's name was kept out of the trial and the resulting fall out, meaning he could continue with his lavish lifestyle. As for Maggie, she disappeared into a life of obscurity as a courtesan in Paris. She outrageously attempted to sue Prince Ali's family over his late estate and at one point pretended to be pregnant with his son, who would have inherited his vast fortune. The Egyptians rejected her attempts in the belief that she had murdered her husband in cold blood.

Regardless, Maggie continued to use the title of 'princess' for the rest of her life and lived in a luxury apartment opposite the Ritz Hotel in Paris. Upon her death in 1971, it was discovered that she had been living off the funds provided by four or five of her lovers, one of whom destroyed the rest of Edward's letters on her behalf. Edward passed away a year later, the extent of his involvement in one of the biggest cover-ups of the 20th century was never fully revealed during his lifetime.

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PRINCESS MARGARET

THE PRINCESS, THE GANGSTER AND THE SAUCY SNAPS

It was Britain's largest and most audacious bank robbery, but the scandal that followed overshadowed the £1.5 million theft and made it an infamous royal disgrace

Written by **Joanna Elphick**

John 'Biffo' Bindon was a British actor during the 'Swinging Sixties', playing vicious thugs and gangsters in films such as *Get Carter* alongside Michael Caine and *Performance* with Mick Jagger, but the bit-part player was also a real-life cockney villain who revelled in the glamourous London underworld. Having served time in borstal as a teenager, young Biffo – so-called because of his inclination to settle disagreements with his fists – initially made his money by trading in live ammunition and disreputable antiques.

As the whippy kid grew into a six-foot-two brute, he began widening his lawless repertoire. When he wasn't acting the hard man on camera, Big John was running protection rackets across West London pubs and offering dubious security services for musicians such as Led Zeppelin.

His rakish good looks not only attracted the attention of movie directors like Ken Loach, but also various socialite bad girls such as Christine Keeler and Vicki Hodge who introduced him to their glittering aristocratic playmates. In this way, the Fulham 'geezer' worked with the Richardson Gang and the Kray Twins while rubbing shoulders with baronets and earls. Upper-class clubs and swinging nightspots became his typical stomping grounds but when he was invited to the Caribbean party island of Mustique, Bindon jumped at the chance to leave London behind and it was here that he was first introduced to the Queen's sister.

LEFT: PRINCESS MARGARET WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR A SCANDAL OR TWO IN HER TIME

Princess Margaret had been gifted a ten-acre plot of land by Lord Glenconner, on which she developed a fabulous holiday home that was to become a magnet for rock stars, Hollywood heartthrobs and bad boys with whom she could party away from the prying eyes of British reporters. Bindon, with his sexy hard man image, attracted the attention of the princess and, although she later flatly denied ever meeting him, photographic evidence showing them sitting next to one another and laughing, strongly suggesting the chemistry between them. Other guests confirmed the obvious fascination she felt for his cockney ruffian charms and rumours soon circulated regarding their inappropriate affair.

While Margaret carried on her wild, abandoned lifestyle, believing herself to be untouchable on this remote spot, someone was watching her every move and capturing her less-than-regal behaviour on film. The media and its hungry readers quickly gobbled up photographs of the Queen's beautiful sister partying with the likes of Mick Jagger and David Bowie, but some pictures never made it to the front pages of Britain's tabloids. Whispers of a series of pornographic images of Margaret and Bindon were quickly denied by the royal household but the story refused to die. In fact, over the following years it escalated into a full-blown conspiracy theory.

So the tale goes, the photographs eventually ended up in the hands of infamous black activist Michael de Freitas, more commonly known as Michael X. The Black Liberation Army leader could

LLOYDS BANK

not believe his good fortune and quickly stored the indecent photographs in a safety deposit box in the Baker Street branch of Lloyds Bank with the intention of using it as financial leverage when the time seemed right. Meanwhile Margaret continued her lascivious behaviour, moving on to new, young lovers such as Roddy Llewellyn with whom she would also be caught in flagrante on camera, resulting in her divorce from Anthony Armstrong-Jones. But the alleged pictures of the princess and her gangster lover remained hidden away under lock and key until the Baker Street bank robbery reignited the rumours once again.

Anthony Gavin was a small-time criminal and Sherlock Holmes fan who, having read Conan Doyle's *The Red-Headed League*, was inspired to plan a daring bank heist of his own. Using a motley crew of career criminals and shady friends, he began setting up what would become a world-famous burglary.

While Reg Tucker rented a safety deposit box at the Baker Street bank in order to check the building out, Benjamin Wolfe leased the shop two doors down to the gang on the understanding that he would be given a cut of the stolen goods if they were successful. The plan was brilliant, yet ultimately simple: they would dig through the floor of the shop, making a 12-metre tunnel that would come up inside the bank vault.

Luck was initially on their side since nearby roadworks had caused the bank's trembler alarms to be repeatedly set off and were therefore deactivated, allowing them to blast their way through the floor using gelignite. However, their luck ran out when Robert Rowlands caught wind of the crime while scanning the airwaves on his radio. Intrigued by the suspicious conversations between the burglars and their lookout man, Rowlands set up a cassette recording and called the police.

Officers covered a 16-kilometre radius of Rowlands' flat, which included 170 banks, but when they eventually reached the Baker Street Lloyds branch, nothing appeared out of place. The security doors were firmly shut with no sign of a forced entry. Unknown to them, on the other side of the reinforced steel doors, Gavin and his thieving gang were loading up the safety deposit boxes and hauling them back down the tunnel, unaware of the explosive images now in their possession. It was the perfect crime.

When the bank reopened, £1.5 million in cash was missing; 260 empty safety deposit boxes raised the total loss at approximately £3 million. But if the rumours were to be believed, something far more valuable had also been stolen. A message, clearly written by Conan Doyle fan Gavin, had been left on the vault wall to taunt the detectives: "Let's see how Sherlock Holmes solves this one."

ABOVE: POLICE ARRIVE TO INVESTIGATE AT THE BAKER STREET BRANCH WHERE THE BURGLARY TOOK PLACE

THE D-NOTICES

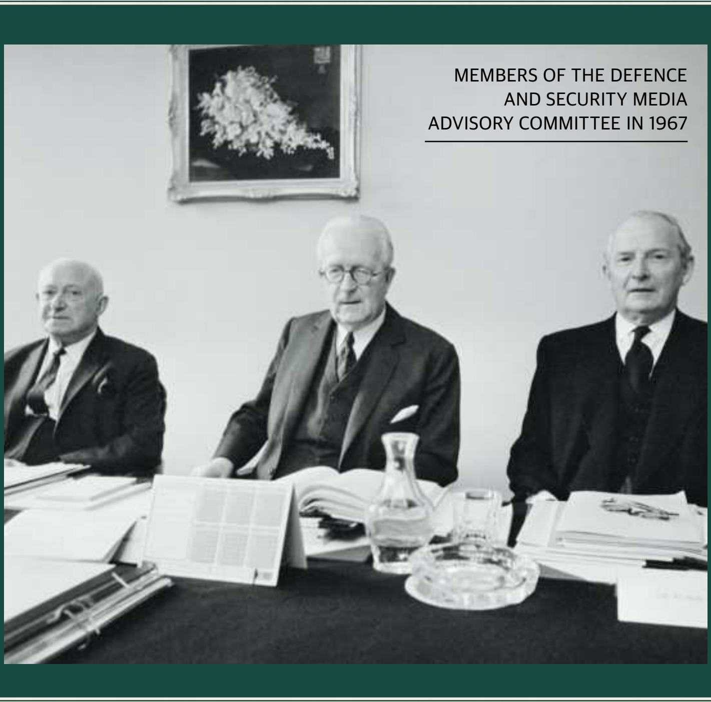
An unusual collaboration between the state and the media may have kept Margaret's gangster lover a secret

First introduced in 1912, the D-Notice system attempted to uphold the freedom of the press while maintaining national security, particularly during threats of war. The initial Notices were more like a gentleman's agreement between the War Office and the Press Association with a status of a request rather than an order.

Over the years the name changed from DA-Notices to the current Defence and Security Media Advisory or DSMA-Notice, but the ethos has remained similar with a continued sense of honourable conformity rather than strict enforceability.

D-Notices have been applied in a number of notable situations over the years and for a variety of reasons. For example, one was issued in 2009 over highly sensitive anti-terror documents, while another one was raised the following year over sensitive documents that were threatened to be published on the Wikileaks website.

More recently, two D-Notices have been issued to protect members of MI6 during the incident in Salisbury, England, where Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were both poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent in 2018. In this way, the D-Notice acts as a fragile compromise between Great Britain's national security and the vital freedom of the press.



MEMBERS OF THE DEFENCE AND SECURITY MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN 1967

“THE ALLEGED PICTURES OF THE PRINCESS AND HER GANGSTER LOVER REMAINED HIDDEN AWAY”

TOP LEFT: THE PRINCESS STATED THAT SHE HAD NEVER MET BINDON, BUT SHE CLEARLY HAD

ABOVE: PRINCESS MARGARET LOVED TO SURROUND HERSELF WITH ROCK STARS AND WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE HAD AN AFFAIR WITH MICK JAGGER

BELOW: A RUGGED BRUTE, JOHN BINDON'S COCKNEY CHARMS MADE HIM QUITE THE LADIES' MAN

News broke of the robbery at 9am the following morning and became an instant front page story around the world. Frenzied media coverage was set to continue for some time, but on the fourth day all reporting of the event ceased. Rumours that the British government had issued a D-Notice for national security reasons soon spread, but they were neither confirmed or denied. However, Rowlands was warned not to talk to reporters and when he innocently asked why not, plain-clothed detectives threatened to prosecute him for using an unlicensed radio. This was a conspiracy theorist's dream.

The bank job was an undeniable reality with four of the gang being caught and convicted, but the surrounding details have remained highly nebulous. Not one of the gang was prepared to talk and all refused the tempting deals that were offered to them. As a result, none of the exquisite jewels and private belongings have ever been recovered and many of the wealthy clientele have declined to report anything stolen, although 138 claimants did attempt to sue Lloyds Bank.

Flames of the scandalous royal rumours have therefore persisted and are periodically fuelled by documentaries and articles. Some have claimed that MI5 knew the location of the offending photographs all along and threatened the thieves into silence, spiriting the images away before the media could be informed. They would certainly have been keeping a close eye on Michael X and, had he acquired the pictures, they would have been aware of the potential harm they could cause if released to the public. Alternatively, it has been suggested that MI5 actually instigated the burglary themselves in order to get hold of the pictures before the Black Liberation Army leader had the opportunity to do anything with them.

Starring Jason Statham, the 2008 movie *The Bank Job* was loosely based on the Baker Street heist, and it has undoubtedly reinforced the notion, turning the tenuous theory into a believable hypothesis. A further documentary that aired on the History Channel in 2011 compounded the supposed scandal.

We'll never know the truth behind the scandal – those who know the truth about the infamous snaps are sadly no longer with us to settle the rumours. Bindon was charged with murder in 1978 and, having been acquitted, became a recluse before dying in 1993. Michael X, owner of the alleged photographs, fled to Guyana and was executed in 1975 for the murder of Joseph Skerritt, a member of his black commune, while Princess Margaret passed away on 9 February 2002, taking her saucy secrets to the grave with her. Wonderfully salacious as the rumour is, the tale of Margaret and her gangster lover will inevitably remain just that, a sordid speculative story.

© Alamy, Getty Images

PRINCESS ANNE

A FRIGHTFUL THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE PALACE

Nobody was expecting the events of 20 March 1974. The Princess Royal was travelling home from one more dreary public engagement when a mentally unhinged would-be kidnapper arrived on the scene. Fifteen minutes later, four men had been seriously injured and Princess Anne had narrowly escaped with her life

Written by **Jon Wright**

The year 1940 was a memorable one for heroic British civilians. On the advice of Winston Churchill, King George VI announced the arrival of a new medal – the George Cross. It was intended for those who had exhibited outstanding bravery "not in the presence of the enemy." Replacing the old Empire Gallantry Medal, the award highlighted acts of courage beyond the battlefield. With the bombs falling and the tragedies unfolding on the domestic front, the war years and their immediate aftermath saw many gain recognition for their valour. The pace slowed after 1947 but a steady stream of medals continued.

Before the shocking events of 1974, only three members of the Metropolitan Police had received the Cross. In 1953, Frederick William Fairfax was celebrated for his astonishing actions at a Croydon factory: clambering up drainpipes, dragging fellow officers to safety despite being painfully injured in the shoulder, and returning – undaunted – to the scene. In 1958, Henry William Stevens continued his pursuit of two burglars, despite having been shot in the jaw and teeth, and managed to snatch clothing from one of the men, which proved crucial in securing their conviction. Finally, Anthony John Gledhill was awarded the Cross in 1967 after thinking nothing of pursuing five men through the streets of Deptford and South London at 80mph and bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion, in what can only be described as a gun battle more reminiscent of the Wild West than Swinging Sixties London.

LEFT: PRINCESS ANNE WAS JUST 23 YEARS OLD WHEN THE TERRIFYING EVENT TOOK PLACE

They were joined on the roster of courageous coppers by James 'Jim' Wallace Beato,n who did as much as anyone to keep Princess Anne safe during her harrowing ordeal in 1974. Aged 31, Beaton had been involved in royal protection since the summer of 1973 and had only recently been assigned to the princess. His was to be a baptism *under* fire. Beaton was winningly modest when he received his medal. He insisted that the real heroes are those who, day in, day out, head into situations where danger and life-threatening scenarios are par for the course. By comparison, he said, "my so-called courage is very puny." The princess, her mother, and the British public saw things very differently – as would anyone who heard the tale of 20 March 1974, to which we now turn.

The Princess Royal had never performed all that well in the court of public opinion; she was easily dismissed as aloof and prickly. Ahead of the kidnap attempt, however, her stock had begun to rise. People were impressed by her commitment to Save the Children (she became president of the charity in 1970), her equestrian exploits had snared her the title of BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 1971, and her relationship with Mark

Phillips had gobbled up its share of column inches. Aside from a shared love of horses, the match was an odd one, but their marriage in November 1973 was a decidedly glamorous affair. The princess's frock was gorgeous, the pageantry was at full throttle, and an estimated 500 million people worldwide tuned in to watch the proceedings. In the following year, affection for Anne soared even higher, but for all the wrong reasons.

On the night of the abduction attempt, Anne and Mark were making their way back to Buckingham Palace following a charity film screening. They were travelling with Beaton, their chauffeur Alex Callender, and Anne's lady-in-waiting Rowena Brassey. The party made use of a recent addition to the royal fleet of cars: a 1969 Austin Princess Vanden Plas limousine, purchased in 1972. With the tell-tale number plate NGN 1 it was technically intended for the Queen's use, but could be borrowed by lesser royals when needed. It was a robust vehicle, very popular at the time – John Lennon had one, too – but, as would become clear, it was not quite up to the job of protecting a princess in extreme circumstances.

The limo had just entered the Mall when a white Ford Escort swerved in front of the royal vehicle, forcing it to stop. The chauffeur went to investigate and protection officer Beaton assumed it was just "someone who wanted to be a pain in the neck" – a disgruntled driver with some minor complaint, perhaps. He was quickly disabused of this notion. The man – who turned out to be the 26-year-old petty criminal Ian Ball – advanced towards the princess's car brandishing two handguns. Beaton sprang into action and shots were fired: he was hit in the right shoulder at a range of just six feet. Beaton managed to return just one shot before his Walther PPK jammed and, as he crouched down with hopes of freeing the mechanism, Ball continued his march towards the princess. Her lady-in-waiting managed to make her escape, but this gave Ball his chance to enter the limousine. Beaton managed to clamber inside, too, and covered Anne's body with his own as a human shield. Ball looked set to fire again, but Beaton managed to deflect the bullet, doing significant damage to his hand. As a final blow, Ball managed to shoot at Beaton for a third time: hitting his stomach and pelvis before pushing the officer from the car.

The injuries kept coming. Chauffeur Alex Callender made his way out of the car en route to the back seats where he hoped to wrestle the gun away from Ball. Callender was shot in the chest for his efforts. A passing journalist, Brian McConnell, recognised the royal insignia on the princess's vehicle and realised that something was badly wrong. He, too, made his approach, only to be shot and debilitated. Mercifully, another policeman, Constable Michael Hills, was posted nearby. He

had heard the commotion and radioed a message to Cannon Row Station before entering the fray. Continuing the bloody trend, Hills was shot in the stomach but, before passing out, managed to get another message to Cannon Row demanding that reinforcements be sent immediately. They would respond quickly, but amidst the chaos two other civilians were able to play their part. Glenmore Martin parked his car in front of Ball's, making an easy escape impossible (this proved to be extremely useful). And then the unassuming Ronald 'Ronnie' Russell entered the history books. The former boxer realised that Anne was making a run for cover and that Ball would undoubtedly pursue her. He bundled Anne back into her vehicle and then strode boldly up to Ball and punched him in the face. With police now on the scene, Russell made another attempt to disorientate Ball – hitting him in the back of the neck seems to have done the trick – then rushed the princess to safety. It was left to DC Peter Edmonds to take the lead in apprehending Anne's assailant.

Appropriately, Jim Beaton was not the only man to be rewarded for his bravery. George Medals, one notch down from the George Cross, were presented to Ronnie Russell and Constable Hills; Queen's Gallantry Medals were received by DC Edmonds, Brian McConnell and Alex Callender; the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct went to Glenmore Martin.

Beaton spent a full five months in hospital and recovery but soon returned to Princess Anne's side, where he would remain for another five years. Perhaps the greatest compliment of all was paid to Ronnie Russell. Elizabeth II has always worked hard to separate the private individual who happens to wear the crown and the public

FAR LEFT: BALL BEING LED TO COURT, WHERE HE PLEADED GUILTY TO ATTEMPTED MURDER AND KIDNAPPING

ABOVE LEFT: THE JOURNALIST BRIAN MCCONNELL WELCOMES A ROYAL VISITOR TO HIS HOSPITAL BEDSIDE IN MARCH 1974

LEFT: THE POLICE SEARCH THE SCENE OF THE CRIME FOR EVIDENCE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ATTEMPT

ABOVE: THE HOUSE AND POTENTIAL HIDEOUT IN FLEET, HAMPSHIRE, RENTED BY IAN BALL

"JUST GO AWAY AND DON'T BE SUCH A SILLY MAN"

Princess Anne has never relished being told what to do and she has a penchant for speaking her mind, but these traits came in very handy when confronted by a gun-wielding assailant

"Just go away and don't be such a silly man." Such was Princess Anne's reaction to Ian Ball's attack. Get out of the car, he pleaded. "Not bloody likely" was Anne's riposte. Her dislike of dancing to someone else's tune is legendary. Walkabouts or meet-and-greets? Who needs them? "How many people enjoy walking into a room full of people that you've never met before? And then try a street." Shaking hands is just silly: "The theory was that you couldn't shake hands with everybody, so don't start." During a tour of the United States, Prince Charles politely asked officials why the bald eagle was America's symbol. Anne, or the "royal sourpuss" as she was dubbed by the *Washington Post*, chipped in with "a most unfortunate choice, isn't it?" It takes some skill to offend an entire nation in just three seconds. Anne's brusqueness also derives from a heightened sense of the royal family's elevated status. What did she think of the public being allowed into Buckingham Palace? "Don't know… it is not public property. It is the property of the Crown." But isn't most of the chart-my-own-course attitude rather refreshing? When she telephoned Prince Charles to discuss the kidnap attempt "she told me about it as if it were a perfectly normal occurrence" and the prince could only admire her "bravery and superb obstinance." Perhaps Lord Patrick Beresford put it best: "She's got the same quick brain as the Duke of Edinburgh and doesn't suffer fools."

PRINCESS ANNE'S EMBARRASSING FALL AT THE 1982 BADMINTON HORSE TRIALS WHICH LED, BY SOME ACCOUNTS, TO THE "NAFF OFF" COMMENT DIRECTED AT GUFFAWING PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS

KEEPING THEM SAFE

Royal security costs the taxpayer a fortune and the bills aggravate a fair few MPs. But what price do you put on keeping the head of state out of harm's way? People were asking the question in 1974; they ask it still

In recent years, Jim Beaton – one of the heroes during the kidnap attempt – has been bruisingly frank about the state of royal security in the mid-1970s. He is as loyal a retired policeman as you'll find but, on that fateful night, "I had nothing… there was no back-up vehicle… the training was non-existent… but, then again [we thought] nothing was going to happen." Beaton was especially peeved by the lack of a radio. Back then, that would have meant unsightly antennae, and aesthetics apparently took precedence over protection. Things had to change and so they did, albeit at a glacial pace. The guns that jammed had to go immediately, replaced initially by more reliable Smith & Wesson Model 36 revolvers. Structural improvements came more slowly. A separate Royalty Protection Branch arrived in 1978, further rationalisation (or at least rebranding) was undertaken in the 1980s, and we have had the Royalty and Specialist Protection unit (RaSP) since 2015. Teething problems have been legion. Prior to the merged RaSP, those protecting royalty would receive an ad hoc pay supplement as compensation for long hours while those on other security assignments could expect formal overtime rates. This created a wage disparity, so those on royal duty began to receive regular overtime. This resulted in a huge hike in the wages bill and one cost-saving measure has been the establishment of a pool of protection officers and an end to the days when a royal figure was able to develop rapport and trust with a single operative over several years. It is all about the money – and we are told that the Queen is not amused.

ABOVE: A MINOR SETBACK. A ROYAL PROTECTION OFFICER REQUESTS A NEW VEHICLE AFTER THE QUEEN'S BENTLEY REFUSES TO START FOLLOWING CHURCH SERVICES AT ST MARY MAGDALENE, SANDRINGHAM

office of monarch, but she made a heartfelt exception for Russell: when he received his medal, Elizabeth said that it "comes from the Queen, but I want to thank you as Anne's mother." She also took time to look into Russell's affairs and paid off his mortgage. Sadly, recent illness-filled years have not been kind to Russell. With huge regret he decided to sell his cherished medal out of financial necessity. It sold at auction for £50,000 on 4 March 2020, over triple its estimate.

We know whodunnit, but why? Shortly after the abduction attempt, the so-called Marxist-Leninist Activist Revolutionary Movement claimed involvement. This was quickly dismissed: Ian Ball had worked alone. He had previously been diagnosed with significant mental health problems, including schizophrenia and depression, and by the early 1970s he was languishing on a meagre income in a small London flat. He did, though, find time (three years in all) to save up his pennies and hatch his plans. Ball was convinced that he had come up with a foolproof scheme.

He travelled all the way to Madrid to purchase his guns, though Camberley in Surrey was deemed suitably exotic for the purchase of the typewriter that would produce Ball's fanciful ransom demands. A false identity was acquired for the purposes of renting a van, and all that remained was the question of where to strike. Ball's first thought was Sandhurst, where Anne and her husband were living. Again, under his alias, he rented a house in nearby Fleet to serve as a post-kidnap hideout and stocked up on supplies. This quickly proved to be an idiotic choice: Ball's distinctive white vehicle was spotted several times during his scouting expeditions and, while no action was taken nor attempts made to identify the driver, vague suspicions were aroused.

A change of venue was crucial and it only took a glance at the Court Circular or a call to the Buckingham Palace Press Office to confirm Anne's movements. The Mall was the new target. Following Ball's arrest, the contents of his vehicle revealed more about his plans. He had handcuffs, a supply of tranquillisers, and a bizarre ransom note. Ball wanted £3 million (in £5 notes, stuffed into a few dozen suitcases) to be delivered to him at Heathrow Airport and, if it wasn't too much trouble, perhaps the Queen could come along for the handover and verify the banknotes' authenticity. Ball would then head off to Switzerland with the cash and, naturally, a full royal pardon. Not that this was all some random act of violent crime, Ball insisted. No, he had his cause: the money was earmarked for improvements to the NHS's mental health care.

It only took two months for Ball's case to come before the Old Bailey – there wasn't much of a defence to be mounted – and a Home Office psychiatrist concluded that Ball was suffering from a "serious psychological disorder." He was found guilty of attempted murder and kidnap, but was destined for a life in high-security mental institutions; a lot of time was spent at Broadmoor. Aside from a short-lived interest in staging hunger strikes and a few letters sent to his MP, claiming that he had been a pawn in a grand hoax, nothing much more would be heard from Ian Ball.

As for Princess Anne, her cool head during her tribulations was echoed in her swift return to public duties. By May 1974 she was to be found presenting the FA Cup to a triumphant Liverpool FC, commissioning a new turbine frigate – the HMS Amazon – and formally opening the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. There

Image source: Getty Images; Alamy

was something reminiscent of Queen Victoria in all this. The monarch had survived seven assassination attempts during her 63-year reign and it was almost always a case of business as usual as quickly as possible. What do you do when Edward Oxford shoots at you in 1840? You carry on with your carriage journey to take some air and to convince the crowds that their confidence in the queen should not be dented. What do you do when another would-be assassin tries his luck in 1882? You enjoy the spectacle of Eton schoolboys beating the attacker with their umbrellas and then make a joke of it all, of course. "It is worth being shot at to see how much one is loved," wrote Victoria, just a few days after the attempt, in a letter to her eldest daughter.

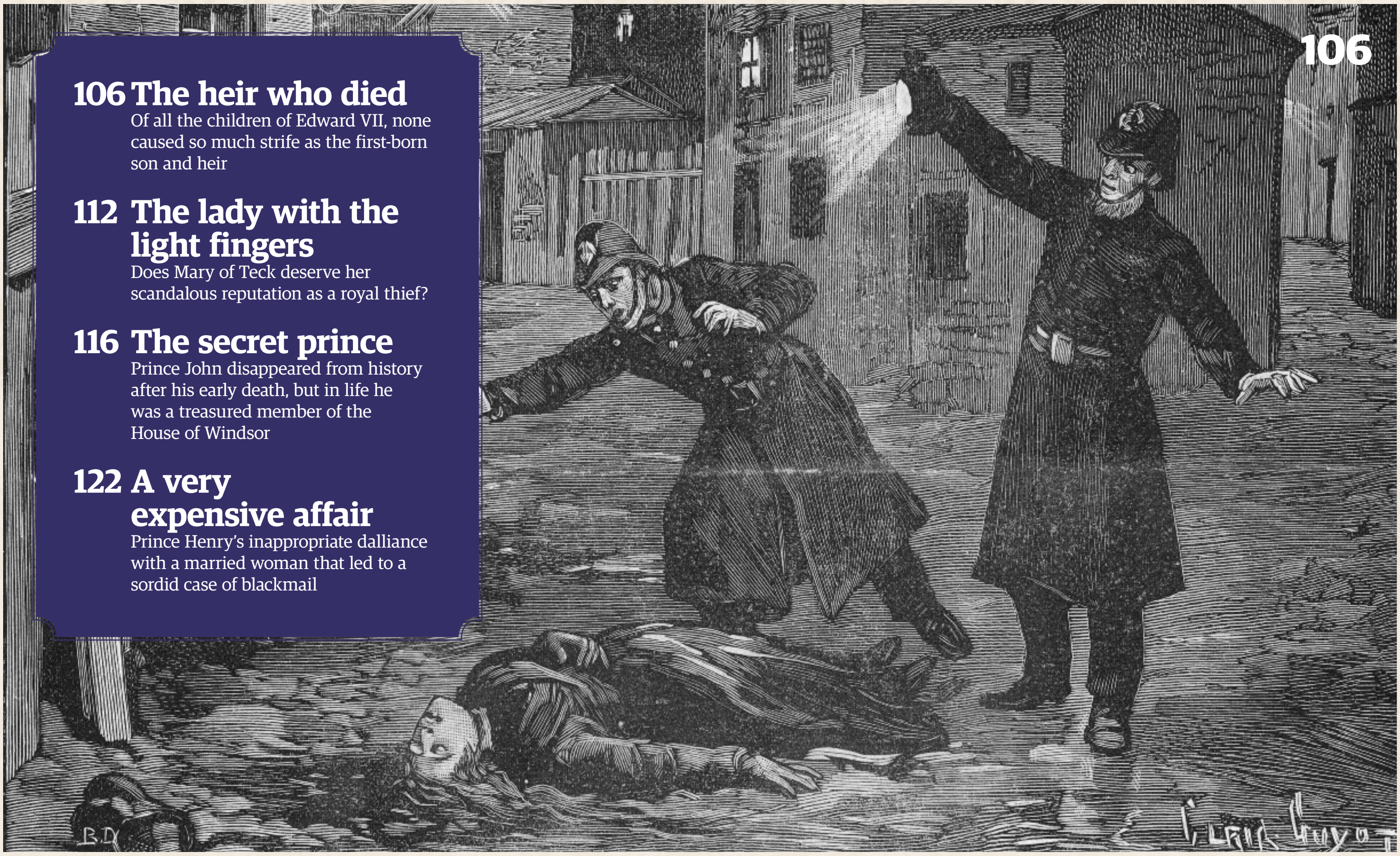
Not that we should imagine that either Victoria or her great-great-great granddaughter emerged unchanged or unshaken from their ordeals. Anne was more candid than Victoria was ever likely to be: "There was only one man," she later said, but "if there had been more than one it might have been a very different story." That's a hard lesson to learn when you are still in your twenties.

The only remaining mystery is why the third series of the Netflix drama *The Crown* decided to omit the botched abduction. The writers claimed that it didn't fit their timeline, and they could only include the really important developments. The series is not best known for its historical accuracy, but omitting one of the most sensational royal events of the entire decade is unfathomable.

TOP: THE GANG IS ALL HERE. THE HEROES OF MARCH 1974

INSET: ANNE PICTURED WEARING THE STAR OF THE DAME GRAND CROSS, AWARDED BY THE QUEEN FOR HER "CALM AND BRAVE" RESPONSE TO THE ORDEAL

FAMILY SECRETS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Of all the children of Edward VII, none caused so much strife as the first-born son and heir

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Does Mary of Teck deserve her scandalous reputation as a royal thief?

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Prince John disappeared from history after his early death, but in life he was a treasured member of the House of Windsor

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Prince Henry's inappropriate dalliance with a married woman that led to a sordid case of blackmail

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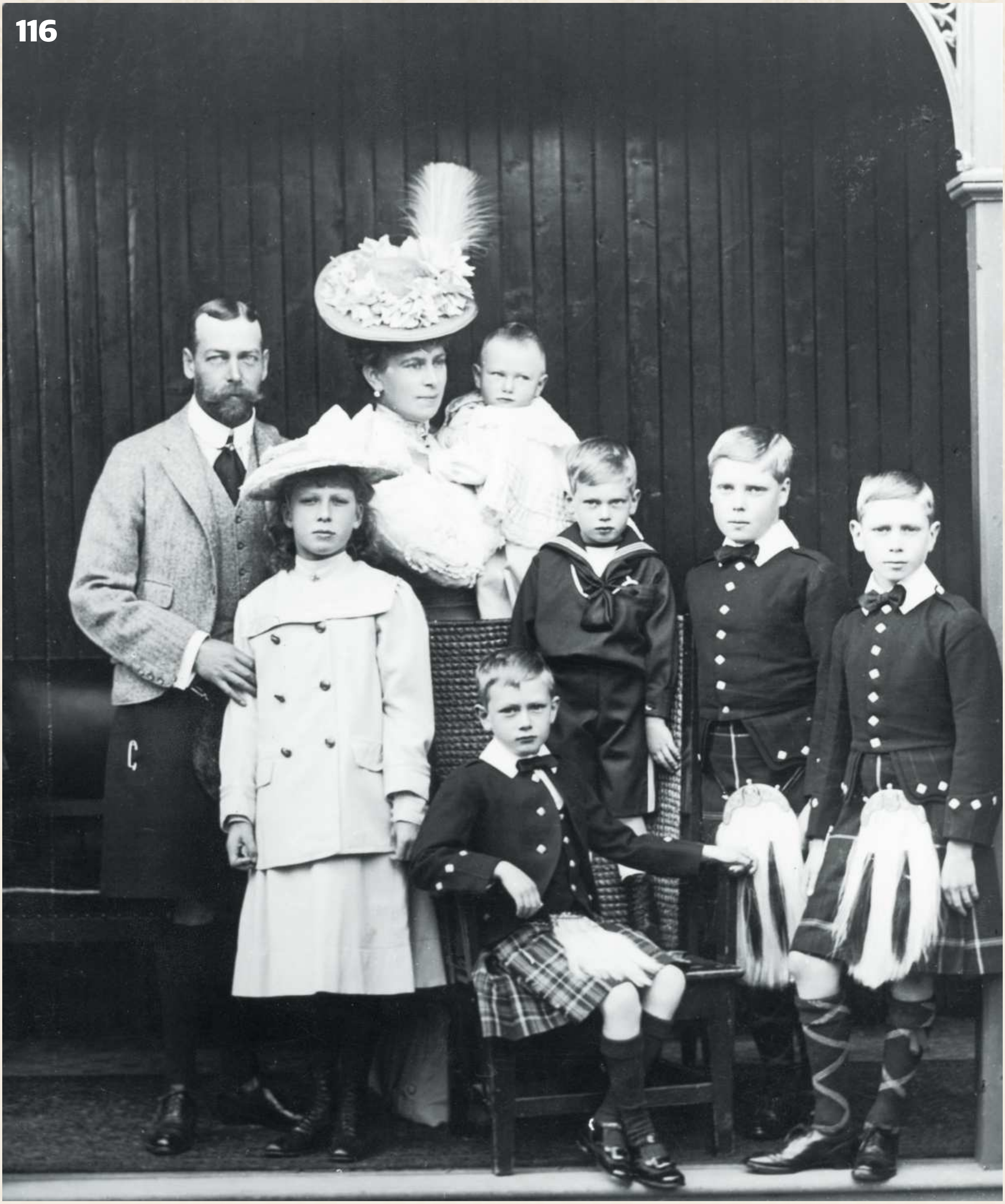


PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR

THE HEIR WHO DIED

Of all the children of Edward VII and Alexandra's brood, none caused so much strife as the first-born son and heir

Written by **Catherine Curzon**

Edward VII inherited the throne in 1901 from his mother, Queen Victoria, who is remembered as one of the most upright and rabidly monarchs Great Britain had ever seen. Though Edward might have inherited her crown, he certainly didn't inherit her ironclad morals. With a brace of mistresses, a love of gambling and even a private room in the most exclusive brothel in Paris, there was nothing he loved as much as the high life. Yet Edward VII was a husband and father as well as king, and with his wife, Alexandra, he had six children. Although one of them, Alexander John, didn't survive infancy, his three sisters and two brothers flourished.

Edward and Alexandra's eldest child was Prince Albert Victor, who was known as Eddy. Though he died young, Albert Victor survived more scandal than his siblings would see in a lifetime. Eddy was not an academically accomplished child, and he abandoned education for the forces as a member of the 10th Hussars. He rarely undertook any public duties and, unlike his popular father, Albert Victor had few fans. That situation only got worse when he had his first taste of scandal, and as the prince was dragged into a sordid court case, his name was on every gossip's lips.

The case began in July 1889 when police constable Luke Hanks was called in to investigate a theft that had taken place in the London Central Telegraph Office. In the course of his investigation, he questioned a 15-year-old telegraph boy named Charles Thomas Swinscow and discovered that he was in possession of a large amount of money. Hanks immediately suspected that Swinscow was behind the theft, but in fact he had just unwittingly blown the lid off a far greater scandal.

Swinscow told Hanks that he hadn't stolen the money, but had earned it as a prostitute in a male brothel situated at 19 Cleveland Street, Marylebone. The brothel was owned and operated by a man named Charles Hammond, and Hammond regularly recruited from among the telegraph boys, using other employees of the Telegraph Office to identify likely employees. Homosexuality and the procurement of homosexuality was illegal at the time and punishable with imprisonment and hard labour, so Hanks reported his findings to his superiors.

The case was handed to detective inspector Frederick Abberline, famous for his involvement in the Jack the Ripper case. Abberline visited 19 Cleveland Street and found the house locked up, with Hammond having long since fled after receiving an anonymous tip off. Abberline was able to arrest Henry Newlove though, an 18-year-old clerk at the General Post Office who had introduced Hammond to Swinscow and several other young men who went on to work at Cleveland Street.

Safe in custody, Newlove began to reveal the names of the brothel's clients. Among the titled gentlemen was one Lord Arthur Somerset. Somerset just happened to be the head of the stables in the household of Albert Victor, the son of the then Prince of Wales. Perhaps mindful of Somerset's connections, no move was made to arrest him, though he was questioned. Instead, Abberline concentrated his efforts on Hammond, and as the net tightened, the police arrested George Veck, a former employee at the Telegraph Office. Veck led the investigation to other prostitutes who named their clients and among those, once again, was the well-connected Lord Arthur Somerset.

Somerset was questioned again. This time when he was released, he headed straight for Germany and a holiday with the royal family. Though Somerset briefly returned to England, when a warrant for his arrest was issued he fled again. This time he didn't return, but instead opted to spend the rest of his life in quiet luxury on the French Riviera. When Newlove and Veck were put on trial, however, they were defended by Somerset's solicitor, and Somerset paid their legal bills in full. Of course, none of this went unnoticed by the press, and by the time the defendants were sentenced to between two and four months' hard labour, the newspapers were making some very pointed remarks about the noblemen whose names had been implicated. Of particular interest was an unnamed but oft-mentioned figure of a very high rank who was a regular at Cleveland Street. With Somerset's connections and the mystery behind the anonymous VIP, the circumstantial evidence was pointing to the insular and unpopular Albert Victor, the Duke of Clarence.

The relative leniency of the sentencing didn't escape gossips either, nor the ease with which

LEFT: PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR WAS DESTINED TO BE KING, BUT HIS REPUTATION WAS TARNISHED BY SCANDAL AFTER SCANDAL. HIS UNTIMELY DEATH, HOWEVER, MEANT THAT HE NEVER FULFILLED HIS DESTINY, AND HIS BROTHER GEORGE BECAME HEIR TO THE THRONE

ABOVE: EDWARD VII AND ALEXANDRA ARE JOINED BY THEIR CHILDREN IN A ROYAL FAMILY PORTRAIT

"THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE FOR THE UNNAMED BROTHEL VISITOR WAS ALBERT VICTOR"

Hammond escaped justice and fled for America. Suspicions of a cover-up were heightened when the British prime minister, Lord Salisbury, personally intervened to decide that Hammond shouldn't face extradition. All outstanding charges against him were dropped and he was allowed to go free, but why? Was it because he had some embarrassing testimony that might come out in court, including names that would rock the establishment? If that was the case, were rumours that Albert Victor was among Cleveland Street's clients true?

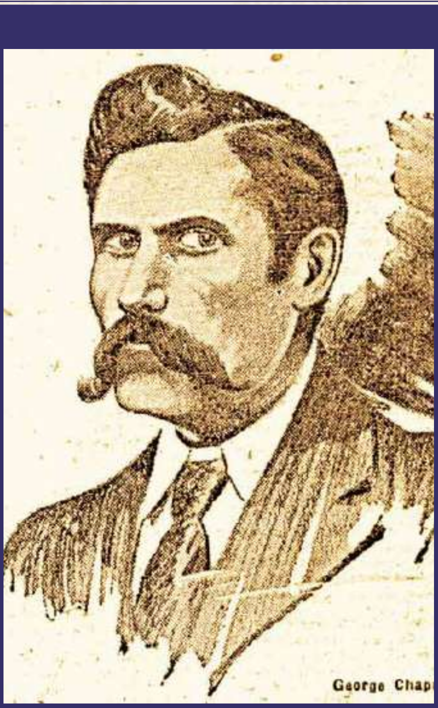
Should Albert Victor be revealed to be a client of a male brothel, the implications for the royal family were immense. It would make the heir to the throne a criminal and in a land where homosexuality was illegal, he would be regarded by his subjects as a degenerate. Anonymous letters sent to Edward seemed to suggest that his son was involved, and even if he was immune to prosecution, the already unpopular Albert Victor couldn't afford to be linked to Cleveland Street.

Mindful of being taken to court if they named names, British newspapers shied away from reporting the case and suspicions around it in any real detail. However, the case just wouldn't die, and with dozens of suspects now being pursued, one enterprising journalist took an interest. He was Ernest Parke and he was the first person to run the story in detail. Though he didn't name names at first, his follow-up stories did, and alongside Henry James FitzRoy, who was earl of Euston and moved in royal circles, Parke mentioned the involvement of an unnamed person who enjoyed an even higher rank. This person, he said, had helped Hammond and some of the prostitutes flee Britain. According to Parke, the anonymous VIP was also behind the prime minister's decision to intervene in Hammond's case and quash the charges against him. The obvious candidate for the unnamed brothel visitor was Albert Victor. His father, Edward, Prince of Wales, was next in line to the throne. It was certainly possible that Edward had personally engineered a cover up and asked Lord Liverpool to smother the case just to keep his eldest son's name out of the papers and the courts. Such a cover up would save the monarchy a potentially catastrophic embarrassment.

The Earl of Euston launched a libel suit against Parke. Euston admitted visiting Hammond at Cleveland Street but claimed that he had expected to find not boys, but an artistic display of posed female nudes. Upon discovering the true nature of the establishment, Euston claimed he made his excuses and left. Despite testimony from the prostitutes who had serviced him, the jury ruled in Euston's favour and Parke was found guilty. Yet the allegation of a cover-up stuck, and when Somerset's solicitor, Arthur Newton, was charged with obstruction of justice, it gathered speed again. He was found guilty and sentenced to six weeks in prison, but he was allowed to continue practising and a few years later, would represent Oscar Wilde when he was arrested for gross indecency.

Newton, some speculated, must have mentioned Albert Victor's name to someone in the know, hoping that he could buy his freedom in exchange for a promise not to name Albert Victor in court. Perhaps it was a subtle attempt at blackmail, invoking the name of the heir to the throne to ensure that the same intervention that had saved Hammond might keep him from prison too. Might Newton have been the person behind those anonymous letters to the Prince of Wales? After all, once the letters began to appear, there was a suspicious lack of arrests, and ultimately none of Cleveland Street's supposed patrons were ever prosecuted. Whether Albert Victor was involved

BELOW: PRINCESS MAUD OF WALES WAS THE YOUNGEST SURVIVING CHILD OF EDWARD VII, AND BECAME QUEEN OF NORWAY BY MARRIAGE



JACK THE RIPPER?

Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, was just one name linked to the infamous serial killer

Albert Victor is not the only man whose name has been linked with the unsolved case of Jack the Ripper. He shares that dubious honour with innumerable other candidates, including Queen Victoria's physician, Sir William Withey Gull, celebrated artist Walter Sickert, and Albert Victor's old tutor, James Kenneth Stephen. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wondered whether the murderer might actually be a woman, suggesting that a midwife would be trusted by the victims and possess the medical knowledge that the killings appear to demonstrate.

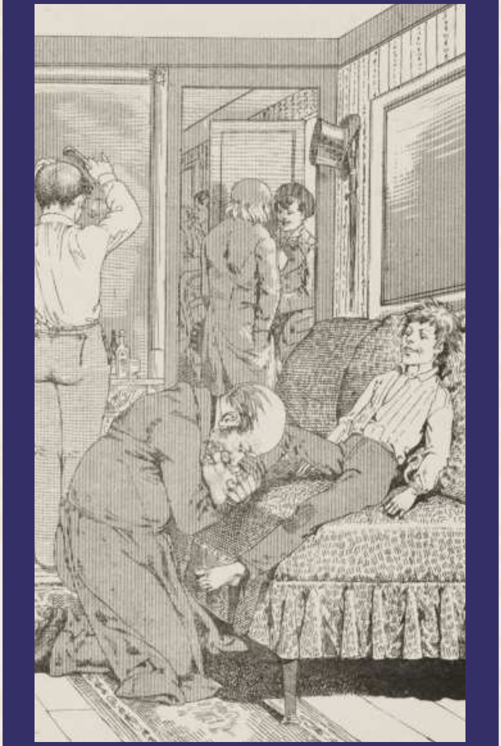
Inspector Frederick Abberline, the officer who led the Cleveland Street investigation, was also a senior figure in the hunt for Jack the Ripper. His prime suspect was Severin Antoniovich Klosowski, a Polish-born serial killer who lived in England. Going by the name of George Chapman, Klosowski fatally poisoned three women before being apprehended and executed in 1903. Although undoubtedly a violent misogynist, no hard evidence has been uncovered that can tie Klosowski to the Ripper murders.

More than a century after five innocent women were brutally murdered, theories continue to be put forward as to who was responsible. The ghoulish fascination that the public has with Jack the Ripper shows no sign of fading.

ABOVE: EXECUTED MURDERER SEVERIN ANTONIOVICH KLOSOWSKI WAS A CONTEMPORARY SUSPECT IN THE JACK THE RIPPER CASE

MOLLY HOUSES

The male brothel at Cleveland Street might have been a scandal, but it wasn't the first of its kind



In the 18th and 19th centuries, homosexual men weren't able to meet in public for fear of arrest and punishment. Instead, they gathered at molly-houses, taverns and private spaces where they could socialise without fear of persecution.

In a world in which homosexuality was a capital offence until 1861, the molly-houses were a welcome place where men could finally be themselves and, hopefully, meet friends and intimate acquaintances. Perhaps the most famous was Mother Clap's molly-house, which was raided in 1726. Its owner, Margaret Clap, was pilloried, and three of her male customers were hanged.

Although sex was certainly an aspect of molly-houses, they weren't necessarily brothels. In the eyes of the law, however, that distinction wasn't so clear, and molly-houses and brothels became intrinsically linked in the mind of the public.

The most famous male prostitute is probably John Saul, an Irishman who was involved in the Cleveland Street scandal as well as a shocking 1884 incident in which orgies were uncovered at Dublin Castle. Saul became a popular character in Victorian pornography before he retired to go into domestic service. He worked as a butler for several years and died in 1904, aged just 46.

ABOVE: MALE BROTHELS AND MOLLY-HOUSES HELD A FORBIDDEN FASCINATION FOR VICTORIAN SCANDAL-MONGERS

ABOVE: ALBERT VICTOR DIED BEFORE HE COULD MARRY MARY OF TECK. INSTEAD, SHE WENT ON TO MARRY HIS BROTHER, GEORGE

or not, he and his father certainly wouldn't want the royal family to be implicated in a homosexual brothel scandal either way.

With Parke's libel case still ringing in their ears, the British press fell silent, but the foreign press was not so delicate. When Albert Victor was sent on an extended tour of India in late 1889, it was regarded as an establishment ploy to cover up his involvement and keep himself out of the public eye. If that were the case, it didn't work, for all it did was arouse more suspicion. Whatever the truth of the matter, whether Albert Victor visited Cleveland Street, let alone whether he was homosexual or even bisexual, has never been established one way or the other. Despite this, to this day Albert Victor's name remains associated with Cleveland Street.

Unfortunately, one thing that the Cleveland Street scandal did do was reinforce the idea of homosexuality as something to be punished. It gave the impression that the majority of homosexuals were vice-ridden, wealthy playboys who had been corrupted by money and privilege. With a focus on the clients, the exploitation of Cleveland Street's young prostitutes went mostly unremarked. This was a belief that persevered for years to follow.

After his return from India, the prince drifted into an affair with a Gaiety girl named Lydia Miller who committed suicide by drinking carbolic acid. In order to keep Albert Victor's name out of the press, Lord Charles Montagu claimed that Miller had been his mistress, but her affair with the prince was an open secret. However, the British press was hesitant about naming Albert Victor just as they had been during the Cleveland Street case. Overseas newspapers weren't nearly so sensitive and were quick to name Albert Victor as Lydia Miller's lover, which was even more fuel for his unpopularity.

Albert Victor died in the influenza pandemic of 1891, just as plans were being made for him to marry Princess Mary of Teck. Dull, indolent, apparently lacking in intelligence and unpopular with the public, his death gave rise to a collection of conspiracy theories that alleged murder and all manner of wrongdoing. In fact, it was nothing of the sort. Albert Victor was simply one of thousands who fell victim to the pandemic that swept the nation.

Yet even in death scandals found him, as a woman named Margery Haddon came forward to allege that the prince was the father of her adult son, Clarence. She said that she had enjoyed an affair with Albert Victor during his Indian tour and that Clarence was the result of their fling. Although the royal family's lawyers admitted that there had been a relationship of some sort, no evidence was ever presented to support Margery's claims of paternity.

Clarence later repeated the allegations in a book, and in 1933 he was charged with extortion after asking George V for money in return for his silence. Both Clarence and his mother were believed to have been suffering from delusions, and their claims were roundly dismissed. That wasn't the end of Albert Victor's brush with gossip, though, and the next allegations against him were far more serious.

> “FOLLOWING ALBERT'S DEATH, HIS NAME BECAME ONE OF SEVERAL SUSPECTS IN THE CASE OF JACK THE RIPPER”

In the years following Albert Victor's death, his name became one of several suspects in the unsolved case of Jack the Ripper. Theories put forward in the 1960s alleged that Albert Victor had fathered a child with a Whitechapel prostitute, and that the Ripper's victims knew the secret and had to be silenced at all costs. Whenever Albert Victor's diary didn't marry up with the Ripper's activities, the theory was amended slightly to allege that he had a gang of co-conspirators who carried out the killings for him. While the theory is certainly dramatic, it wilfully ignores generations of illegitimate royal children whose existence was openly acknowledged, including those of heirs

LEFT: THE FIVE SURVIVING CHILDREN OF KING EDWARD VII AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA, GRANDCHILDREN OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT

BOTTOM LEFT: ALBERT VICTOR, PHOTOGRAPHED ALONGSIDE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, WHO LATER ASCENDED THE THRONE AS KING GEORGE V

to the throne. It's a classic case of a theory that doesn't let facts get in the way of a good story.

Prince Albert Victor packed so much scandal into his 28 years, it's a wonder he found time for anything else. When he died, his brother, George, became heir to the throne. In 1910 he was crowned king, a rank he held until his death in 1936.

Louise, Princess Royal, was the eldest daughter of Edward and Alexandra and was, no doubt to their great relief, entirely without scandal. In fact, she was the model royal daughter and at the age of 22, she married Alexander Duff. Nearly two decades her senior, Duff was already a member of the peerage, and within days of the marriage, Queen Victoria named him First Duke of Fife. The happily married couple had two daughters and a son, who was stillborn, but their marriage was short. Following a shipwreck in 1911, the duke fell ill with pleurisy. He died in January 1912, leaving his wife to inherit his title and become Duchess of Fife. She lived in unscandalous peace for a further 17 years, eventually dying in 1931.

Princess Victoria of the United Kingdom, the fourth child of the king and queen, was similarly well-behaved. Known as Toria, despite being courted by suitors including King Carlos I of Portugal, she remained unmarried and lived at home as her mother's companion until Queen Alexandra's death in 1925. Only then did Princess Victoria strike out alone and move to the village of Coppins in Buckinghamshire, where she lived in happy seclusion. Toria died in December 1935 and was buried at Frogmore. A month later, her brother, George V, also died, his heart broken by the loss of the sister he had adored.

The youngest surviving child of Edward VII and Alexandra was Maud of Wales. She married Prince Carl of Denmark, and when he was chosen to become king of Norway and was crowned Haakon VII, Maud became his queen. Queen Maud and King Haakon had just one child, Prince Alexander. He later reigned as Olav V of Norway, and Queen Maud became a formidable figure in the Scandinavian court. She was devoted to philanthropy and even championed the first home for unmarried mothers in Norway, which was seen as a highly radical move at the time.

Maud was happy in her adopted land, but she always considered England home, and made annual trips back to her native land. Her last public appearance was in England, when she attended the coronation of her nephew, George VI, in 1937. Perhaps fittingly, Queen Maud finally took her last breath in her beloved homeland after falling ill during a visit in October 1938. She was the last of Edward VII's children to pass away; none of them had lived longer than 70 years.

When measured against the relatively staid behaviour of his siblings, especially his sisters, Albert Victor emerges as a man who was no stranger to the pleasures of the flesh. An emotionally distant figure, academically average at best, rarely mixing with the public or moving outside of his own social set, he had none of the charm and affability that made his father, Edward VII, and his brother, George V, so popular. It was this insularity and awkward demeanour that led to the rumours and suspicions surrounding him, but over the years, nothing has emerged to tie him unquestionably to the most outrageous.

From Cleveland Street to Jack the Ripper to suicidal mistresses and beyond, Albert Victor attracted rumours of scandal like a magnet. Had he lived to be crowned king, we can only speculate on what new dramas might have engulfed the monarchy or on how effective a sovereign he might have been. In the end, it's all idle speculation, for Albert Victor never had the opportunity to prove himself as a king, and with George V on the throne instead, Great Britain hurtled head-first into the tumultuous 20th century.

© Getty Images

QUEEN MARY

THE LADY WITH THE LIGHT FINGERS

Does Mary of Teck deserve her scandalous reputation as a royal thief?

Written by **Jessica Leggett**

“The fact is, the Crown must win. Must always win.” If you are familiar with the Netflix drama *The Crown* then these words be familiar, as they were written in a letter to a newly ascended Queen Elizabeth II from her formidable grandmother, Queen Mary of Teck. Although this is a moment of pure fiction, in reality Mary was widely considered to be a cold and stern woman who, along with her husband King George V, strictly followed royal etiquette and understood the importance of her duty. So, how is it that such a queen has gone down in history as a possible kleptomaniac?

Mary was born at Kensington Palace on 26 May 1867, in the same room where Queen Victoria had been born almost five decades earlier. Her father, Prince Francis, Duke of Teck, was German and the son of Duke Alexander of Württemberg. Her mother, Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, was the daughter of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge and a granddaughter of King George III.

Queen Victoria believed that Mary would make a suitable wife and future queen for her grandson - Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, second in line to the British throne - despite the fact that Mary's father had been born from a morganatic marriage. The young couple became engaged in 1891 but, tragically, Albert Victor died of pneumonia during an influenza pandemic just six weeks later.

While in mourning for her fiancé, Mary became close with his brother, Prince George, Duke of York, who had succeeded his brother as the new future heir. The couple fell deeply in love and Queen Victoria, still believing that Mary would make a fine consort, approved of the relationship. They subsequently married in 1893, and with their union, Mary was suddenly one of the most important women in the British royal family.

Mary was extremely proud of her royal heritage, particularly as a great-granddaughter of King George III and Queen Charlotte. She was disappointed to discover that many of the items that had once belonged to the royal family had been sold, loaned or given away over the years, and so she decided to correct this by recouping as many of them as possible.

This quest began even before George ascended the throne in 1910. Mary started collecting works of art that had historical links to her family, researching the objects and cataloguing them all with the help of Owen Morshead, the royal librarian. Attempting to claw back items that belonged in the Royal Collection, Mary even went back through the family accounts to uncover objects that had been loaned to the aristocracy, before approaching these families to request the items back.

As queen, Mary liked to collect a variety of different objects such as jewels, seals, fans, figurines, 18th-century furniture, miniatures, lacquer wares and jades, but items linked to the royal family were her primary focus. It has been said that if she set her eyes on an item that she liked while paying a royal visit to a stately home,

> “MARY STARTED COLLECTING WORKS OF ART THAT HAD HISTORICAL LINKS TO HER FAMILY”

LEFT: AS A GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER OF KING GEORGE III, MARY WAS VERY PROUD OF HER HERITAGE, AND QUEEN MARY WAS DETERMINED TO REACQUIRE THE TREASURES OF THE ROYAL COLLECTION

Mary would make it known to the owner either by drawing their attention to it, or by offering to purchase the object for a low price. Many people chose to give their items as gifts to the queen, afraid that they would cause offence if they refused to part with it.

A possible example of this can be seen with Arthur and Ruth Lee and their decision to give their Chequers Estate to the nation, as a country retreat for the British prime minister, in 1917. After hearing about the plan, Mary inquired after a portrait of her ancestor, King Charles II, which she wanted to purchase for the Royal Collection. Instead, the Lees decided that the only correct solution was to give the painting as a gift to the queen, despite her offer of payment – although we have no way of knowing whether they felt pressured to do so.

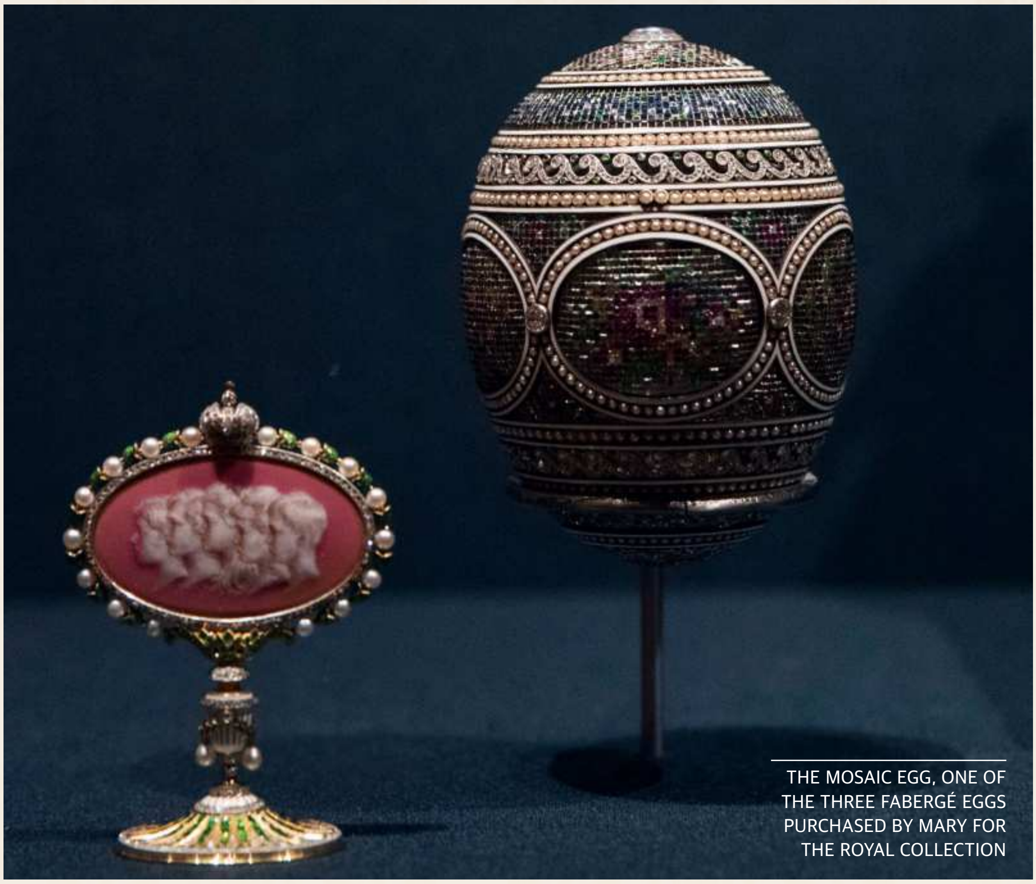
Stories soon began to circulate that the queen was pressuring people into handing over their prized possessions, supposedly sending a panic through the aristocracy, who would run around and hide any items that they thought would appeal to her before an impending visit. It was also said that if the queen caught wind of this, she would allegedly turn up uninvited to pre-empt their attempts to hide their precious belongings.

If these rumours weren't bad enough, it was also claimed that if Mary did not get her own way when it came to an item she liked, she would just quietly steal what she wanted when the owner was not looking. This reportedly led to complaints from some victims, which resulted in Buckingham Palace instructing the queen's ladies-in-waiting to keep an eye on her. As for the stolen items, they would be quietly retrieved by an aide, who would return them to the owner with a letter claiming that a mistake had been made.

It wasn't just stately homes that the queen allegedly struck either. Mary enjoyed perusing museums, galleries and antique dealers in London, and it has been claimed that she frequently took items from the dealers that she liked without paying for them, leaving many of them angered.

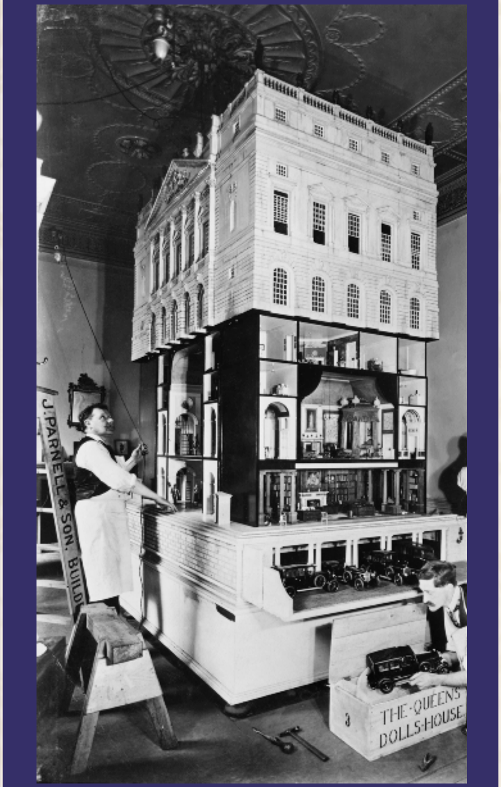
The questions surrounding the queen's rumoured behaviour have recently resurfaced thanks to the 2019 movie, *Downton Abbey*. Set in 1927, the film sees King George V and Queen Mary pay a visit to Downton Abbey while embarking on a royal tour of Yorkshire. During their stay, it is noticed that a few small items, such as a letter opener, have suddenly disappeared and subsequently leaves the people of Downton wondering whether the queen is, indeed, a thief. She is exonerated when lady's maid Anna catches the queen's royal dresser, Miss Lawton, in the act – but nevertheless, this real life mark on Mary's reputation remains to this day.

So, why did people believe the rumours about the queen? Unfortunately, it is hard to say but we do know that even today, people love a good royal scandal and these tales frequently appear in



THE MOSAIC EGG, ONE OF THE THREE FABERGÉ EGGS PURCHASED BY MARY FOR THE ROYAL COLLECTION

© Getty Images



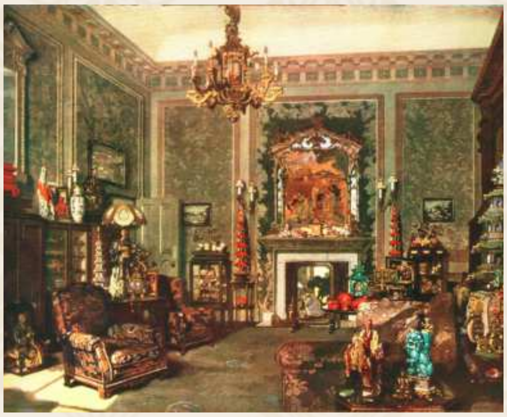
QUEEN MARY'S DOLLS' HOUSE

The largest and most famous dolls' house in the world

The highlight of Queen Mary's extensive collection is without a doubt her beautiful dolls' house. The idea of creating the dolls' house for Mary came from her childhood friend and King George's cousin, Princess Marie Louise. Built between 1921 and 1924 by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, it was given to the queen as a gift from the nation in the years following the First World War. Reflecting the style and life of the 1920s, over 1,500 of the best British craftsmen and artists were employed to take part in the project, which included creating all the furniture and items within the house.

Boasting miniature crown jewels, running water, a flushing toilet, electric lighting, books, artworks, a wine cellar, a garage and even a hidden garden underneath the main building (designed by renowned horticulturist Gertrude Jekyll) – Queen Mary's Dolls' House was a testament to British workmanship of the day. It was displayed at the British Empire Exhibition held from 1924 to 1925 and later exhibited in order to raise money for the queen's charities. Today, the Dolls' House can be seen on display at Windsor Castle, where it remains truly a sight to behold.

ABOVE: THE QUEEN'S DOLLS' HOUSE IS A MINIATURE CREATED AT A SCALE OF 1:12



popular history books. While stories of a thieving Mary have been recounted over the decades, there is no hard evidence that supports the claim that she stole items. That said, it is widely believed that the queen did use her rank to persuade people into handing over or donating their precious items to her collection.

However, even if this is true, it is wrong to define the queen as a kleptomaniac. A kleptomaniac is somebody who has a compulsive urge to steal objects of little value, but Mary was certainly not going around all the stately homes and stealing their napkins, toilet paper and pens behind their backs.

While we cannot ascertain that Mary definitely used manipulative methods to gain items for her collection, we do have plenty of examples of objects being gifted to her. For example, she was presented with an 18th-century fan depicting the game 'blind man's bluff', which possibly belonged to Queen Charlotte, by Lady Ward in 1927. Another fan in the Royal Collection that is believed to have been owned by Charlotte, the Trompe-l'œil lace fan, was presented to Mary by Claude Yorke (son of the Seventh Earl of Hardwicke) in 1939.

Not only did Mary receive gifts, but there are also various records to show that she did indeed purchase many objects for the Royal Collection with her own money. For example, a silver-gilt tureen and cover – which had once belonged to her grandfather, Adolphus Frederick, Duke of Cambridge – was purchased for the Collection by Mary at a Christie's sale in 1916 for £202.

The three stunning Fabergé Imperial Easter Eggs in the Collection – the Basket of Flowers Egg, the Colonnade Egg and the Mosaic – were also purchased by the king and queen in the 1930s, having once belonged to George's first cousins, Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra, who were killed during the Russian Revolution.

Even Mary's son, the Duke of Windsor, commented on his mother's efforts while being interviewed by James Pope-Hennessy (who wrote and published the official biography of Mary in 1959, six years after her death). Discussing the fact that items had left the royal family, the duke stated "Well, my mother corrected all that; she brought things back and bought them back too with her own money." The duke also mentioned the fact that the queen was known for making impulsive purchases, such as the time she was sent Jaipur enamels and jade elephants with jewelled howdahs by an antique dealer in Delhi and, in his own words, "bought 'em all". The Queen certainly wasn't opposed to purchasing the objects that she liked.

Besides royal artefacts, Mary was also interested in the arts of the East and amassed a vast collection during her lifetime. At Buckingham Palace, she even created The Japanese Room, The Lacquer Room and The Chinese Chippendale Drawing Room to display parts of her collection, which included her jade and hardstone carvings.

After Mary's death in 1953, her collection was valued but it was not considered to be worth much. However, the items that she painstakingly gathered throughout her life have helped to preserve the history of the royal family for the nation. According to The Royal Collection Trust, Mary acquired a total of 1,885 objects for the Collection. She also convinced her family members to deposit their papers to the Royal Archives, a deed which royal historians are thankful for.

We may never know the truth about Mary and the tactics she used to grow her collection, but we can be sure that she was never a kleptomaniac. Irrespective of her methods, Mary joins the likes of King George III, King George IV and Queen Victoria as one of the most important contributors to the Royal Collection.

ABOVE: A PAINTING OF QUEEN MARY'S CHINESE CHIPPENDALE DRAWING ROOM IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE

TOP RIGHT: MARY PICTURED ON HER WEDDING DAY WITH PRINCE GEORGE, DUKE OF YORK

© Getty Images; Alamy

PRINCE JOHN

THE SECRET PRINCE

Prince John, son of George V and Queen Mary, disappeared from history after his early death, but in life he was a treasured member of the House of Windsor

Written by **June Woolerton**

The paperboy brought unexpected news on Monday 20 January 1919. Headlines that day announced the death of Prince John, youngest son of King George V and Queen Mary, at the age of 13. A smiling boy in a sailor's uniform looked out at readers in a string of photos marking his life, nestled alongside short and formal obituaries. But if people were unprepared for news of his death, more shocks were to come. The papers revealed that young John had died following an epileptic fit and confirmed he had suffered seizures for most of his short life. It was the first time that the royal family had acknowledged his condition.

The Daily Mirror wrote "sympathy will be felt by everyone for the King and Queen," but in the years that have followed, sympathy for George V and Mary has been in short supply when it comes to John. They have been accused of hiding him away to avoid embarrassment over his epilepsy. John has been described as a 'tragic secret', written out of history and held up as an example of an uncaring attitude in the House of Windsor.

Much of the criticism centres on the decision to send John to live at Wood Farm on the Sandringham Estate with his nanny, Lala Bill, in the last years of his life. The modern telling of John's tale is that his contact with his family lessened as his epileptic seizures became more severe and more frequent. We do know that his public appearances came to an end and that none of his family were with him when he died, on 18 January 1919, at Wood Farm. They found out he had passed away in a telephone call. Critics see this as evidence that George and Mary couldn't cope with either the personal or public fallout from admitting their child had epilepsy and possibly a form of autism too. But one line in Mary's diary soon after John's death reveals a far more human side to the tale that is often told about John. "Miss the dear child very much indeed," she wrote.

John had been a huge part of their lives and their decisions for him in his final years can equally be seen as attempts to give him the best treatment available for epilepsy, a condition for which there was no established medical treatment. Far from being ashamed of John, George and Mary loved him dearly and spent as much time as they could at his side.

It's easy to see why people adored John. He was charming, caring and a rule breaker. Some of the children who played with him at Wood Farm in his last years described him as fun loving, very friendly and concerned for others' feelings. One childhood friend, Elsie Hollingsworth, remembered his fondness for music and how he loved to sit with her, listening to records on her mother's gramophone. Elsie also recalled frequent visits to Wood Farm by George V and Queen Mary. Her father worked on the Sandringham Estate and often told his daughter in the evening that his jobs that day had included driving Prince John up to see his parents and his grandmother, the ageing Queen Alexandra. The modern idea of the abandoned prince longing for family contact sits uneasily with the memories of those who knew the young prince.

There is no doubt that John was born into an unusual family. His parents were an odd couple who became devoted to one another despite a strange start to their marriage. Mary had originally been engaged to George's older brother, Albert

RIGHT: PRINCE JOHN, AS PHOTOGRAPHED HERE IN 1913, SUFFERED INCREASINGLY DEBILITATING EPILEPTIC FITS UNTIL HIS TRAGIC AND UNTIMELY DEATH IN 1919

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Victor, second in line to the throne. When he died, George took his place in the succession and at the altar. He married Mary in 1893 and as Duke and Duchess of York they soon built a big family. The future Edward VIII was born with much fanfare in 1894 with Albert (later George VI) following in 1895. Their only daughter, Mary, was born in 1897 while two more sons, Henry and George, arrived in 1900 and 1902. Mary provided her husband with so many boys that he once joked he would "soon have a regiment, not a family," and life for the children was very regimented. Both George and Mary were strict parents with high standards that had to be met. George drilled his children like soldiers to instill discipline and is reported to have said that as he was scared of his own father, he would make sure his own children were scared of him. Mary liked to read Shakespeare and poetry to her offspring, even at a very young age, and her main contact with them was when they were brought to her room for an hour every evening by their nannies. Their home at York Cottage in Sandringham was run along exacting lines.

John Charles Francis, born on 12 July 1905 at York Cottage, was the last of their children. By the time of his birth, his parents were Prince and Princess of Wales and John's birth was heralded with the usual formal announcements. Sixth in line to the throne, behind his father and four brothers, John was christened on 3 August 1905 with a very royal line-up of godparents including King Carlos I of Portugal and Prince Carl of Denmark who was about to become king of Norway. His paternal grandparents, Edward VII and Alexandra, delighted in the arrival of another baby to spoil (Queen Alexandra called the Wales children the 'Georgiepets') and the beaming young prince with piercing blue eyes soon joined his siblings on picture postcards of the royals, as much a part of family PR as his sister and four brothers.

John was outwardly a healthy, happy baby with a brush of blonde hair and a full face, but he had been born after a difficult labour and had suffered breathing problems after arrival. He soon rallied and his parents expected him to follow in his siblings' footsteps and adhere to the regimented lifestyle of the royal children at York Cottage. But John seemed to have no intention of sticking to the rules, even from an early age.

While there was no sign yet of his epilepsy, his exuberant and defiant behaviour was raising eyebrows. In later years, it has sometimes been taken as evidence that John had some kind of autism and was unable to fully understand the emotions being conveyed so responded to them in a very different way. In one famous incident, George kissed Mary on his return from a hunting trip and John was heard to say, "She kissed Papa, ugly old man," while as he grew up, the youngest of the Wales children became known for practical jokes like putting glue on door handles. His father's fierce response had no impact on John, who just carried on. While his siblings grew nervous when their father drilled them, John smiled through the whole procedure. The US president, Theodore Roosevelt, described a lunch where John and the other royal children joined the adults at the end of the meal. George called out to his youngest son who responded curtly and carried on with what he was doing. Roosevelt recalled George almost proudly predicting that

"WHILE HIS SIBLINGS GREW NERVOUS WHEN THEIR FATHER DRILLED THEM, JOHN SMILED"

York Cottage © The Giant Puffin at English Wikipedia CC BY-SA 3.0

YORK COTTAGE ON THE SANDRINGHAM ESTATE WAS JOHN'S HOME IN HIS EARLY YEARS

LALA BILL AND PRINCE JOHN BECAME INSEPARABLE

"NANNY, I LOVE YOU"

Lala Bill, the devoted nurse who never forgot Prince John

Charlotte 'Lala' Bill's royal career ended up devoted to Prince John, but it had begun almost a decade before his birth. She came to work for his parents, then Duke and Duchess of York, as a nurse to their growing family and soon made her mark. Horrified by the cruel way a senior nanny treated the royal children, she broke ranks and complained. The woman was dismissed while Charlotte ended up head nurse. The trust placed in her by the royals was clear. In one of the last photos taken of Queen Victoria with her family, Charlotte hid behind the monarch to prop her arms up so she didn't drop her newest great-grandchild.

Her royal charges nicknamed her Lala and she was strict and loving in equal measure. They spent so much time with her that Lord Esher noted the eldest, the future Edward VIII, was starting to pick up her slight cockney accent. It was Lala who perhaps first realised that while the older children were moving towards independence, John would need more attention, not less, as he grew up and his seizures became worse.

It was inevitable that Lala would go to live with Prince John at Wood Farm when his parents set up his household there. The two spent every day with each other and while it was Queen Mary who selected local children for John to meet, it was Lala who supervised their games and played alongside them. When John died following a massive seizure, Lala was with him. Queen Mary described the nanny as 'heartbroken' at the death.

Lala Bill never married and had no children of her own, but the bond between her and her royal charges never faltered. She kept a huge photo of John as a toddler on her mantelpiece. When she died in 1964 at the age of 89, a note was found in her belongings. It was written in a large, childish scrawl and read "Nanny, I love you. Johnny".

John would defy him. But even if John's actions were causing concern, the young prince was very far from being hidden away.

John's behaviour could just as easily be put down to his early childhood experiences of his parents. By the time their youngest son was born, George and Mary were expected to take on even more royal responsibilities and when John was just three months old they left for a tour of India, which would keep them away from home for over half a year. Immediately upon their return, they went to Madrid for the ill-fated marriage of George's cousin Victoria Eugenie to King Alfonso XIII of Spain, and soon after that they headed to Oslo to see John's godfather crowned King Haakon VII of Norway.

By the time their son turned one, they had spent just four months in the same country as him. Their rota of royal duties was just as heavy in John's early years. If he defied them more than the others did, it may have been down to a lack of contact necessitated by royal life as much as any condition like possible autism. But before George took the throne in 1910, John's health would cause serious cause for concern.

At the age of four, the young prince suffered his first epileptic fit. At the time, medical understanding of the condition was limited. We know now that epilepsy is linked to neuron activity within the brain, but when John had his first seizure the word 'neuron' was barely known, coming into existence in the 1890s. Although epilepsy had been documented since around 4000 BCE, treatments for it were rudimentary. Bromide had been used to stop seizures for several decades but the first modern treatment, phenobarbital, wouldn't be developed until 1912. Often, people with epilepsy were put in asylums and they experienced much stigma and ridicule. But far from hiding their son away, instead George and Mary ensured that their son was part of their now very public life.

On 6 May 1910, Edward VII died and George V took the throne. A new era for the ruling dynasty had begun with PR-savvy George in charge and just like his brothers and sister, John had an active role to play in the creation of a new royal family. John was taken to watch his grandfather's funeral outside Marlborough House in London. In reality, no one would have batted an eyelid had the youngest of their princes missed the procession, but his parents insisted he take part. At around the time his epilepsy became evident, George and Mary took him to one of the most public events of recent times played out in front of thousands who had come to pay their respects to Edward VII. John was as much a part of the funeral as any of his siblings, but that's perhaps because his parents had a deeper understanding of his condition than many others.

George V, in particular, had experience of epilepsy already. His uncle, Queen Victoria's youngest son Leopold, had had seizures as well as suffering from haemophilia. George had seen that uncle enjoy a full and active life before his death at the age of 31. Leopold's widow had helped raise funds for the Hospital for Epilepsy and

ABOVE: MARY OF TECK WITH HER CHILDREN AT ABERGELDIE CASTLE, ABERDEENSHIRE

THE PRINCE OF WALES IN 1919, THE YEAR THAT PRINCE JOHN DIED

THE KING WHO CALLED PRINCE JOHN "AN ANIMAL"

The future Edward VIII's harsh words on his brother caused outrage and upset

John enjoyed a close relationship with the brothers closest to him in age, but his bond with his eldest sibling, Edward, was more difficult. Two letters exist that show the future Edward VIII had trouble expressing any warmth for John. One caused outrage when it was discovered years after both royals were dead.

That controversial letter was sent to Edward's mistress, Freda Dudley Ward, just two days after John's death. Edward describes the loss of his brother as "the greatest relief imaginable or what we've all silently prayed for". But during the six-page letter, he adds, "No one would be more cut up if any of the other three brothers were to die than I should be, but this poor boy had become more of an animal than anything else and was only a brother in the flesh and nothing else."

They are harsh words even for someone who might be able to plead the shock of grief. But the brothers' relationship was inevitably limited – Edward was 11 years older than John and they spent little time with one another. In 1907, when John was two, Edward left the family home to go to naval college at Osborne, then Dartmouth. After that, the two brothers would never live in the same house again.

He admitted the lack of closeness to John in another letter to his mother, in which he said, "No one can realise more than you how little poor Johnnie meant to me who hardly knew him". This missive followed an earlier, lost letter in which he had appeared to use more insensitive language to Queen Mary about Prince John. Although its contents aren't known, Edward himself admitted that "I feel such a cold hearted and unsympathetic swine for writing all that I did."

Edward has often been portrayed as a troubled and selfish man. His attitude to John has done little to dispel that.

"GEORGE AND MARY ENSURED THAT THEIR SON WAS PART OF THEIR PUBLIC LIFE"

Paralysis in London after his death. George ended up as resident of the National Society for the Employment of Epileptics, which was established in 1892 to help people with the condition find jobs. The society was setting up farms around the country, known as colonies, where people with epilepsy could live and work together – an idea that was seen as radical and forward thinking. Seeing their son experience seizures was a shock to George and Mary, but perhaps one they were better prepared for it than others.

If John's life became more isolated in the early years of his father's reign, that was all but inevitable. His parents had even more royal duties to perform now, heading to India again in 1911 for their coronation as emperor and empress there. His eldest brothers were a decade his senior and had gone to naval college before his first seizures took place. The two siblings closest to him in age, Henry and George, loved to spend time with him, while he had another playmate in his cousin, Crown Prince Olav of Norway, who sometimes came to visit. But eventually Henry and George were sent away to school too, at St Peter's Court in Kent, and soon after that came the first public indication that John's life would be different.

A report in *The Times* refuted previous claims the youngest prince would attend St Peter's Court. No reason was given but by now, John's fits were becoming more regular. It is also suspected that he was struggling to keep up academically. One of the children he later played with at Wood Farm, Winifred Thomas, swapped photos with him, which he signed and that show that even as he approached adolescence, John's handwriting remained large and childlike. His tutor was dismissed when John turned 11 and his education was now in the hands of Lala Bill. She would be his main companion and carer when the decision was made, at the height of World War I, to move John to Wood Farm.

George and Mary's decision to send John to Wood Farm is often seen as the crucial piece of evidence for their coldness towards their son and their determination to hide him away. But at a time when fresh air, peace and relaxation were advocated by leading experts in epilepsy as ideal treatments for those with the condition, these royal parents were able to use their influence and wealth to give their children just what the doctors had ordered. At Wood Farm, John had a happy and carefree existence with Lala Bill tending to all his needs and every day filled with playing and fun. George and Mary provided John with a happy and comfortable life in his new house. Not only was he surrounded by his favourite toys and possessions, but his mother broke the social rules of the time to find him friends. She met local children and the families of estate workers to select playmates for John.

Queen Alexandra had a special flower garden planted at Sandringham and John regularly visited her to tend their patch together. George and Mary visited him often and he spent Christmas Day 1918 with them before returning to Wood Farm. His condition was clearly of concern, but when Lala Bill phoned them on the afternoon of 18 January 1919 to say he had died after a severe fit, the shock was complete.

Mary recorded in her diary that "our poor little Johnnie had passed away suddenly," and later wrote to a friend that "his malady was becoming worse as he grew older… he has thus been spared much suffering". John's funeral took place soon afterwards at St Mary Magdalene Church with his special place in the family shown at his burial. His parents had named him in honour of George's youngest brother, Alexander John, who had lived for just a day in 1871. Now, they laid him to rest beside the uncle he had never known. Queen Alexandra wrote to Queen Mary that their "two darling Johnnies lie side by side".

Years later, vociferous criticism of George and Mary claimed their shame over John's epilepsy led them to pretend he no longer existed. He wasn't mentioned in the official programme for their Silver Jubilee in 1935 and a later Windsor family tree missed his details out altogether. But the same tree also missed out Alexander John. In fact, the evidence shows that John was an integral part of George and Mary's family and given a lifestyle believed, at the time, to offer good support for people with epilepsy. As parents they may well have been worried about the impact of stigmatisation on their son should his condition become public knowledge, but it's also clear that John's fits, in a time with no real medication to help control them, were debilitating and left him in need of extensive care. His family clearly loved and valued him and wanted to keep him safe and their love for John was shared by many. So many people wanted to come to his funeral that they ended up standing outside the church and John's grave was covered in a carpet of flowers. Far from being hidden, John had been such a large part of royal life at Sandringham that no one could stay away from paying their last respects to a prince they thought of as their own.

TOP LEFT: PRINCE JOHN, IN A BLACK-TRIMMED COAT AND HAT WITH A FEATHER IN IT, IS PHOTOGRAPHED ON A SHOPPING TRIP IN HIS EARLY YEARS

RIGHT: THE YOUNG PRINCE WAS SEEN LESS FREQUENTLY AT ROYAL EVENTS AS HIS EPILEPSY BECAME MORE DEBILITATING

© Alamy, Getty Images

HENRY, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

A VERY EXPENSIVE AFFAIR

The affluent London society were all too aware of Prince Henry's inappropriate dalliance with a married woman but that didn't stop a sordid case of blackmail from unfolding

Written by **Joanna Elphick**

Prince Henry was born on 31 March 1900, the fourth child of the Duke of York, later to become King George V, and Mary of Teck, later Queen Mary. As fifth in the line of succession to the throne at birth behind his grandfather, Edward Prince of Wales, father and his two elder brothers, Henry should have lived a charmed life, but his time was often punctuated with bouts of utter misery and disappointment. So much so that his niece, Queen Elizabeth II, referred to her uncle by the nickname 'Poor Harry'.

Henry was an exceptionally sickly child with a nervous disposition, resulting in prolonged fits of weeping followed by hysterical laughter. Unlike his father, who was an impressive figure, he was thin and stick-like, wearing leg splints to correct his knocked knees and, like his brother Edward, often caught influenza and severe colds rendering him bedridden. His elder brother Albert, later to become King George VI, famously battled a speech impediment but, although less documented, Henry suffered far more with a variety of disorders. With his squeaky nasal lisp and inability to pronounce his 'R's, the child looked and sounded far too fragile to cause a stir and yet, 28 years later, he would sit at the epicentre of an outrageous royal scandal.

Feisty Beryl Clutterbuck, the other protagonist in this infamous Windsor disgrace, was born into a life so very different from Prince Henry it was a wonder the pair ever met. Charles Baldwin Clutterbuck was a celebrated horse trainer living in the quiet village of Ashwell in Leicestershire. When his wife, Clara Agnes, gave birth to a bouncing baby girl on 26 October 1902, she instantly became the apple of her father's eye. But whilst her future lover was cowering in his nursery hiding from the world, Beryl was a fearless toddler, perpetually looking for adventure and excitement. Her life looked set to follow the typical course for a young girl at the beginning of the 20th century but when her father made a radical decision to uproot the family and move to Kenya, her life changed direction in a most unusual way.

Clutterbuck was a savvy businessman and was quick to see the enormous financial opportunities that would open up for a first-rate horse trainer living among the wealthy expats in Africa. Having purchased a sprawling farm in Njoro, he began setting up what was to become a highly profitable business and, once settled, he sent for his wife and children to join him. Four-year-old Beryl was instantly smitten with her new exotic home but Clara was mortified by the changes and after a very short period, returned home to the comforts of England, taking Beryl's older brother Richard with her but leaving her little daughter behind. It was a betrayal that she would never get over and the sense of abandonment would stay with her forever. However, while her mother became a faded memory that would not contact Beryl until she had reached adulthood, her father became the centre of her universe.

Unfortunately, her father was far too busy concentrating on his career to care for a young child and so, while Charles was out racing horses, Beryl was left to fend for herself. The servants who had been employed to work on the farm took it upon themselves to raise the little girl, teaching her Swahili rather than her native English. She ran barefoot among the animals, eating and playing with the local tribes while fragile Prince Henry was kept inside the palace for fear of him catching a cold. Within four years her future lover would become the third in line to the throne while Beryl was given

RIGHT: ALTHOUGH THE FRAILEST OF HIS BROTHERS IN YOUTH, HENRY WHEN ON TO GREW INTO THE TALLEST AND MOST HANDSOME

under three years of schooling in Nairobi before she was unceremoniously expelled for being a troublemaker. Not that she cared about that – throughout her wild and exciting life travelling across the globe, it was Africa that she loved the most, later claiming that her amazing and unconventional childhood was a "world without walls".

Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, spent his teenage years confined and controlled by British formalities and royal etiquette. His father refused to allow him to live at Trinity College while he studied there in case the impressionable boy started mixing with any undesirable individuals lurking within the undergraduate cohort, although it was here that Henry began to grow up and develop a personality of his own. Beryl, on the other hand, cavorted with whomsoever she pleased, learning to handle spears and rifles to such an impressive degree that she was often encouraged to join the male warriors on their hunting expeditions – the only white woman who had ever been invited to do so.

By the time her father had realised his mistake in allowing his daughter to live such an unruly lifestyle it was too late to correct. Clutterbuck hired a governess by the name of Mrs Orchardson in order to teach her the ways of a lady, for without these skills it was highly unlikely that he would ever be able to find her an eligible husband.

RIGHT: HENRY AND EDWARD WERE TO BEHAVE INTOLERABLY DURING THEIR TOUR OF KENYA

FAR RIGHT: BERYL MARKHAM WAS A STRIKING WOMAN LIKE NO OTHER THE PRINCE HAD EVER MET

THE HAPPY VALLEY SET

Described by literary critic Cyril Connolly as 'the Three As: Altitude, Alcohol and Adultery', the Happy Valley set created their very own Gomorrah

Beryl Markham was just one of the scandalous individuals that made up the Happy Valley set, so-called because of the location of their outrageous settlement. It was during the 1920s that a handful of the British aristocracy escaped the astronomical taxes and general drudgery of England and made their way to the beautiful Happy Valley region along the Wanjohi River in Kenya. English country-style houses were erected, with the Muthaiga Country Club where Henry first laid eyes upon Mrs Markham, at its centre.

The glamorous inhabitants spent their time maintaining an extraordinary lifestyle that consisted of alcohol-fuelled orgies, wife-swapping and general substance abuse where opiates were a prerequisite of any social gathering and general debauchery was the order of the day.

Over the years, a motley crew of ultra-privileged white elitists gravitated towards Happy Valley with the intention of fulfilling their wildest hedonistic dreams without paying the usual consequences associated with such irresponsible behaviour. However, many of its infamous inhabitants did in fact come to a sorry end. Mary Miller, Countess Alice de Janze and Kiki Preston all committed suicide, while the undisputed leader of the Happy Valley set, Josslyn Hay, was found murdered in his car.

THE MUTHAIGA CLUB GOLF TEAM: WHEN THEY WEREN'T ON THE COURSE THEY WERE SWAPPING WIVES AND DROPPING OPIATES

© Getty images

Beryl detested the woman, choosing to live in a mud hut within the farm perimeter rather than share a roof with her. Things only got worse when Mrs Orchardson and her father began an affair right under the nose of his feral daughter. From this point on, Beryl refused point blank to acknowledge her existence.

When his father ascended to the throne in 1910, young Henry was sent to school, thereby becoming the first son of a British monarch to reject a private tutor in favour of a regular education. It was a risky venture, particularly considering his delicate nature but, rather than weaken the child, it was the making of him. Within a matter of days, he begged his father to let him become a boarder instead of a day boy. The king agreed and it was here at St Peter's Court in Broadstairs that he discovered a lifelong love of sport and the great outdoors. For the first time ever, Henry began to shine, not as an intellectual, but as a fervent team player. A period at Eton College followed in which he honed his sporting skills and by the time he attended Trinity College, Cambridge, he was a picture of health and vitality, taller and more muscular than his siblings and far more robust. The king and queen still kept a watchful eye over him, never quite seeing him as anything other than the 'delicate one' of the family and the queen in particular was disquieted by his obvious lack of intelligence. On one notable occasion Queen Mary wrote to her son at Cambridge to find out how his studies were coming along. Henry replied with a long and tedious letter recounting his last cricket match moment by moment and ending with a description of his new hobby… catching mice. Expecting his mother to be proud of his efforts, he regaled her with details of the 50 rodents he had trapped so far, describing them as a "splendid bag". It would seem that the queen was quite right to worry about her simple-minded son, but at least he was getting stronger by the day.

On leaving university, Henry joined the army, attending the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Although his position as a senior member of the royal family meant that he could not take on overly active or dangerous missions, he was a well-respected soldier and quickly rose up through the ranks, ultimately becoming a Field Marshal in 1955 as well as a Marshal of the Royal Air Force. However, in 1928 he was just a young, good-looking Captain ready to serve his country. His mother still fussed over him and begged her husband to give him a safer role to play and so the king decided to send the guileless boy to Africa.

> "FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, HENRY BEGAN TO SHINE, NOT AS AN INTELLECTUAL BUT A TEAM PLAYER"

ABOVE: HENRY AND ALICE CELEBRATE THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE KING AND QUEEN, AS WELL AS ALICE'S MOTHER, AT BALMORAL IN 1935

"FOR BERYL IT WAS CASUAL SEX BUT FOR THE PRINCE, IT WAS AN EVERLASTING BOND"

Edward, the popular Prince of Wales, was to take a three-month tour of Kenya where he was expected to represent his father and undertake a number of royal duties. Sharp-witted Edward saw this expedition as an opportunity to embark upon one continuous bed-hopping extravaganza and was more than happy to take his little brother along for the ride.

Realising that Henry had been ludicrously sheltered by their mother, he decided to introduce his naïve brother to the wonderful world of wanton women and there were plenty to choose from where they were going. The pair of handsome bachelor princes set off on the P&O liner, Kaisar-i-Hind, in September 1928 and made their way straight to Nairobi with its non-stop parties and entertaining women. Edward was used to females flinging themselves at him wherever he went but this was a new experience for Henry, particularly women such as Beryl.

By the time Beryl crossed paths with the princes, she was already on her second marriage, having taken her first husband just before her 17th birthday. Husband number two, English aristocrat Mansfield Markham, was more than aware that he had grabbed a tiger by the tail when he slipped a ring on Beryl's finger and quickly realised that a monogamous relationship with her was going to be out of the question.

Henry first met Beryl at the opening ball at Nairobi's Muthaiga Club. At almost six-feet tall with shaggy blonde hair and blue eyes, the prince was instantly smitten, having never come across such a woman before. However, Beryl was not initially interested in him since her sights were locked on to the main prize, the future king of England. Edward was more than happy to oblige and repeatedly slept with Mrs Markham over the next few weeks. For him this was nothing more than light-hearted sport but when Beryl eventually turned her attention to Henry, he became utterly besotted. Although her behaviour was highly indiscreet, bouncing back and forth between the two princes, it was the nights she spent with Henry that caught the locals' attention and was quickly described as an affair. For Beryl it was casual sex but for the prince, it was an everlasting bond. While Markham was irritated by his wife's infidelities he chose to say nothing, seeing a financial opportunity ahead, and so the scandalous affair unfolded.

In the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro, Henry confessed his undying love for Beryl, insisting that she follow him back to England after the royal tour had ended. Unfortunately, news that their father, the king, was desperately ill meant that the good times finished prematurely and the princes were called home straight away. Once back in England, Edward took up with any number of willing young ladies but Henry moped until Beryl decided to pay him a visit. She was met at the port by an embarrassingly overexcited prince

who immediately saw to it that she was given a suite of rooms at the Grosvenor Hotel. It was a perfect location, minutes away from Buckingham Palace with a handy side entrance for secret assignations. It was during one such nightly visit that Beryl announced her awkward condition. She was pregnant. Such a scandal was unthinkable within the royal household but Henry was far too love-struck to see the inevitable fallout. Apparently he was also too foolish to realise that the baby couldn't possibly be his and he was, quite simply, being played.

While the unrelenting rumourmongering continued, Henry visited Beryl every day, even attending the hospital when the baby was born. Such indiscreet behaviour convinced his aristocratic playmates that the child was his despite the fact that the pair had first slept together a mere four-and-a-half months earlier. Little Gervase Markham was quietly spirited away to live with his grandmother while Beryl and Henry resumed their brazen affair, with the prince even moving into the Grosvenor with his mistress. But this inappropriate conduct was always going to end with dire consequences.

It soon became apparent that Henry had played into the Markham's hands. Sir Charles Markham, Beryl's brother-in-law and head of the family, approached Queen Mary with a box containing the explicit love letters between her son and Mrs Markham. It was a simple case of blackmail. The queen must 'take care of Beryl' or her precious son would be cited in the most scandalous divorce proceedings of all time. Queen Mary, acting with icy decorum, summoned both Sir Charles and Mansfield Markham, making it painfully clear that there would be no such mention of Henry in any future divorce. However, a settlement was eventually agreed upon and the eye-watering sum of £15,000 was placed in a trust fund for Beryl Markham. The annuity was paid into her account until her death in 1986.

It had been a carefully orchestrated deception, carried out by the entire Markham family, Beryl included, and the dim-witted Henry had played right into their hands. Beryl cared nothing for her name and was happy to swap her already sullied reputation for an equally tainted monthly income. The divorce went ahead but no mention was made of Henry in the proceedings. Somehow the scandal had been played out with minimal collateral damage to the royal family's good standing and would appear a minor bump in the road compared to the devastating humiliation of Prince Edward's abdication in 1936.

The king shuttled his undisciplined son from Japan to Ethiopia in order to keep him out of trouble and, after a tour of Australia, he finally settled down, marrying Lady Alice Montagu Douglas Scott in 1935 after enormous pressure from the queen. Unlike his previous torrid affair, the courtship with Alice was a far more dignified and regal event.

Although Beryl Markham went on to find fame as an outstanding aviatrix, completing a solo flight across the Atlantic in 1936, she never found happiness or contentment, dying alone 26 years after her third marriage ended due to countless infidelities. Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, on the other hand, remained married for 38 years until his death, having two sons. He made up for his hedonistic youth in later life, supporting both his brother, King George VI and later his niece, Queen Elizabeth II but, despite working tirelessly for the royal family, he never quite managed to shake off his scandalous affair with the Machiavellian Beryl Markham.

ABOVE RIGHT: BERYL HAD THE ABILITY TO CAPTIVATE ANY MAN SHE LAID EYES ON BUT NO MAN WOULD EVER STEAL HER OWN HEART

BELOW: MRS MARKHAM LOVED HER PLANE MORE THAN ANY MAN

FISTICUFFS WITH THE PRINCE

A pair of monogrammed cufflinks is all that remains of yet another scandal involving the Duke of Gloucester

Anyone privileged enough to work for the royal family is expected to obey any command given and never to get into any public contretemps with them. Unfortunately, that is exactly what occurred between Henry and his personal equerry during the summer of 1934.

The Beryl Markham scandal was common knowledge among Great Britain's aristocrats and while the royal household were trying to quash any unseemly rumours, Prince Henry appeared to be flaunting his inappropriate conduct. The fight in question occurred between the prince and his long-time friend and equerry, Howard Kerr, at Hillsborough Castle in County Down. Their host, the Duke of Abercorn, could only look on in horror as Henry lunged at Kerr during pre-dinner drinks.

Henry had already imbibed far too much alcohol and was in a foul mood since he had just learnt that he was to be sent on another tour abroad days before the infamous Mrs Markham was due to return to London. Kerr suggested that the duke might feel it was time to abandon such folly and find himself a wife. A royal punch-up ensued. The cufflinks were an apology from Henry after knocking his friend to the ground.

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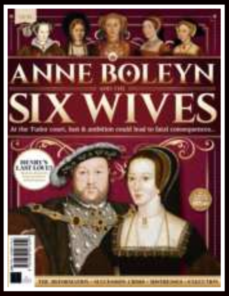
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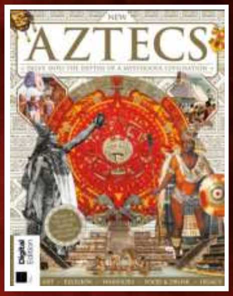

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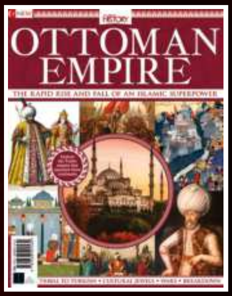
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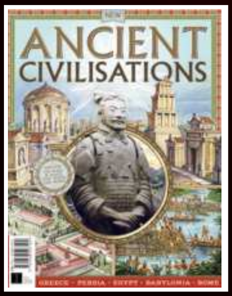
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